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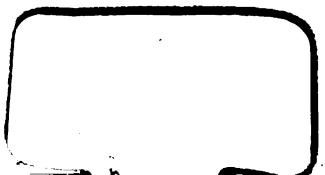

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WOMAN THROUGH THE AGES

Giraudon

AN EGYPTIAN LADY

FROM A BUST AT THE LOUVRE

WOMAN
THROUGH THE AGES

BY

EMIL REICH

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY
31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET
1909

AN [illegible] LADY

[illegible]

WOMAN
THROUGH THE AGES

BY

EMIL REICH

IN TWO VOLUMES

WITH THIRTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I

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PREFACE

THE title of the present work will, I trust, make it quite clear that I do not pretend to have written the history of woman. All that, in the present state of the available sources, could be done was to give a number of more or less interesting notes on the condition and influence of women in a few centres of western civilization. Woman, or more than one-half of humanity, has by nearly all "serious" historians been neglected as a subject unworthy of their meditations. In this respect Polybius or Thucydides is in a line with the mediæval woman-hating chroniclers. More especially in this country there is no easier way of making oneself looked down upon than by paying attention to the *rôle* of woman in social and historical life. English history is the history of a people that has never taken women *au sérieux*. Perhaps the present compilation will help a few Englishmen to get out of that *chinoiserie d'idées*.

E. R.

WOMAN
THROUGH THE AGES

EGYPTIAN WOMEN

CHALDAEAN AND ASSYRIAN WOMEN

FOR want of Egyptian literature proper, our knowledge of the early civilization of the world, as embodied in the dwellers on the Nile, is gleaned from the inscriptions on the monuments, temples, and tombs, from the numerous objects buried with the mummies, and from papyrus rolls. These are our first-hand sources, which recent excavations have placed at our disposal.

From the times of Hecataeus and Herodotus these people and their land have been considered as extraordinary phenomena; their history was supposed to be full of enigmas, while there seemed to be a mysterious connection between their religion, their sciences, and their hieroglyphics and all that was deepest in present-day thought. But now that we are able to decipher their hieroglyphics, this glamour which surrounded Egypt has given place to a disappointment that the Egyptians were after all a singularly unimaginative people, cleaving to things utilitarian, and incapable of rising to the plane of ideals. However this may be from a historical standpoint, there is much that is of interest to us in a

civilization ranging back thousands of years, wherein woman played a conspicuous part; and the details of her life and status are not the least interesting part of that civilization.

Women, with the Egyptians, occupied a well-defined, important and high position. Religion largely influenced their home life; for since their goddesses shared with the gods supreme power, so the women were held to have the same equality with men in human affairs. Religion illustrated the union of Love and Strength producing Life. The woman as the producer was placed first, not as a superior, but as an equal; and the child inherited and took the rank of its mother, irrespective of the status of the father. The mother also gave her name to the child. All this is in direct contrast to the tendency in historical times in the direction of men's rights, and we are at liberty, therefore, to assume that this system of female predominance was an outcome of the primitive age.[1] Indeed, it would seem to be a relic of the times when polyandry prevailed.[2] This acknowledgment of maternal descent, and the consequent importance attaching to womanhood, may be traced to the prevailing practice of families to consecrate their girls to the service of the gods in the temples, and especially in the temple of Amon at Thebes. Such consecration entailed a sexual expression which is abhorrent to modern ideas, but it was no immorality in the eyes of the Egyptians, with whom it merely meant a convenient method of selecting suitable wives. Hence it followed that offspring could trace descent with certainty to a mother, but never to a father.

So universal was this practice that there was

[1] W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Egyptian Tales* (1899), First Series, p. 49.
[2] Lippert, *Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit*, vol. ii., p. 6 *seq.*

scarcely a woman in the New Empire, from the highest to the lowest, who was not connected in this way with a temple.[1] The duties allotted to these women were of a congenial nature, for they were attached to the temples as singers and musicians, to make music in the presence of the god; and it was in the harem of the god that they ministered to him in the several degrees of rank which they held. At the head of this harem at Thebes was usually the queen, as personifying the heavenly consort of Amon; and to the women of the harem was assigned the duty of playing the sistrum to the god during public worship. An instance of this playing of the sistrum by women at the festival of the "erection of the pillar of Ded" has been found depicted in a Theban tomb. While the Pharaoh and his suite are engaged in the main object of the festival, the queen, "who fills the palace with love," looks on at the sacred proceedings, and her sixteen daughters make music with rattles and with the jingling sistrum.[2]

This equality of woman with man, described above, extended even to the priesthood, for we find women as priestesses in temples dedicated to goddesses.[3] Though woman was given the first place as the mother of all being, and was thus a personification, as it were, of the goddess Nit the Creator, we never find her alone in their mythology, but always with a husband, the group being completed with a child, thus forming a triad. Woman is thus honoured in her motherhood, which carried with it the care of old age, a duty which was compulsory to the Egyptian female and not to the male.[4]

So unique in the ancient world was the equality

[1] Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 295.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 279.
[3] Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilisation* (1901), p. 126.
[4] Herodotus, ii. 35.

extended to Egyptian women, making them in fact appear as if they were the controlling influence in the household, that the Greek historians whose writings have come down to us altogether failed to appreciate a position which was so totally different from their own idea of the relations of man and woman. Among the many extraordinary phenomena they have recorded of these, to them, phenomenal people, they would have us believe in the absolute supremacy of woman in Egypt; and Diodorus Siculus even goes to the length of saying that man, at the time of marriage, resigned his freedom, and contracted to render implicit obedience to the commands of his spouse. This is a view of the historian which we must attribute to the halo of imagination investing an extraordinary people.

In spite of her equality, submission to her husband was a virtue in the Egyptian wife, and we see it represented in the picture of the Lord Ti where his wife is clasping him by the foot. In another we find the wife behind her husband at a sacrifice. There is also a well-known representation of a Pharaoh whose queen has her arms thrown round him in loving embrace. It is equality with due submission to the male strength, but superiority given to and received by the woman on the supposed combination in her of the qualities of man with her own. She was the protectress, by her insight, of her husband and her home, as she was supposed to be endowed with the gift of seeing and hearing things invisible to him. She was the nourisher of the growing life of the home, and was thus entitled to an equal power in ruling either in business or even on the throne; nor did widowhood dispossess her of her rights. This position applied not to all wives, but only to those taken from a rank equal to that of the husband;

the wife ruling her own household, the husband visiting her in the position of a guest. Apart from household duties, the ladies of the harem would also occupy themselves with politics, and even in those days women were a "power behind the throne."[1]

Among the working classes woman shared with man the burden of life. The women wove, and they carried burdens equally with the men; but women's special sphere was the management of the home. They were thus peculiarly tenacious of home life, in its honours and its comforts. Any offence against maternity was rigorously punished. Diodorus tells us that infanticide was punished by the mother being compelled to hold the little corpse for three days in her arms.[2] Even though this be tinged with the spectacles of a Greek historian, it is clear from records that crime invariably brought dire punishment. Summary justice was, however, never dealt out to women, even if the fault were committed in the harem. They were entitled to proper trial, as we see in the conspiracy of the Princess Tey in the harem of Ramses III.[3]

Domestic life, therefore, in Egypt tended towards the emancipation and the honouring of women, for in thus honouring her the people also honoured the source of life; they indeed honoured immortality. Woman in this ancient civilization was thus allotted her proper rank as a companion of man. Side by side with the loving and faithful intercourse of husband and wife we are, of course, confronted with the existence and extent of harems; but slaves and concubines were held as chattels, and their possession was in no way looked upon as a phase of infidelity or immorality. It is the same general idea which has

[1] Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (1894), p. 55. [2] Diodorus, i. 77.
[3] Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (1894), p, 142.

been running through all Oriental nations from time immemorial. Polygamy as affecting the married status was quite the exception, although it was authorized by law; and it was practically restricted to the highest and the wealthiest, as we find in the case of certain Pharaohs, Ramses II having added a third to two existing wives for political reasons.

It has been stated above that women did the weaving as well as the men. This is in contradiction to the statement of Herodotus,[1] in whose eyes most things Egyptian were phenomenal and opposed to the current practice of other nations. But the old monuments give us proof that women were employed in the manufacture of woven fabrics, of which their linen was considered of remarkable texture. Indeed, its transparency and softness were so striking that in the painted sculptures, especially of women, their entire form is made visible through their gossamer garments.[2] According to Herodotus Egyptian women participated in trades and handicrafts, though he does not specify which;[3] while music and dancing naturally came within their domain.

The Egyptian woman really gained her importance because of her motherhood, however much we may deprecate the way in which such importance was attained; and her influence on society was such as we do not see in other ancient nations, not even among the Greeks of later times. Indeed, the reverence and honour a son felt for his mother can only be paralleled by the high respect for womanhood in times which we reckon as those of advanced civilization. With him, honour for his mother went to the extent of her being

[1] Herodotus, ii. 35.
[2] Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt*, vol. i., p. 487, note 12.
[3] Herodotus, ii. 35.

generally represented on his tomb with his wife. It was his filial devotion to his mother which gained for Ramses II eternal life in the heavens. Thus it became usual to trace descent through the "spindle or distaff side" and not through the male. Marrying an eldest daughter meant becoming heir to the father-in-law, and this succession to property through the daughter shows an importance in womanhood which is perhaps unique in history.

The mother had charge of the child and nursed it for three years, and tended it as long as it had the child-lock, which was an uncertain period. Thus we see the child Horus in the arms of his mother Isis, the beloved goddess of the Egyptians, whose holy tears gave them the nourishing, life-giving waters of the Nile.[1] It was to the Nile that according to tradition they sacrificed in the time of the Pharaohs a young girl dressed as a bride, who was known as "The Bride of the Nile."[2] This was the foundation for the romance of *Die Nilbraut* of G. Ebers.

In the royal courts women were either chosen from the daughters of high officials or were the relatives of neighbouring kings who were received into the palace as hostages. From among all these who formed the harem one alone was acknowledged as the queen, and she as a rule was a princess of the royal household, or more generally a sister, as the marriage of brother and sister was looked upon as quite the correct thing. Indeed, we find this practice common even down to the time of the Ptolemies, most of whom married their sisters. So natural was this considered by them that the term "sister" is even

[1] Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization* (1901), p. 21. See also Pausanias, x. 32, sec. 10.

[2] G. Lumbroso, *L'Egitto al tempo dei Greci e dei Romani*, pp. 6–10.

applied to a mistress; and the terms "brother" and "sister" are synonymous with lover and mistress in their love-songs.[1]

The position of the queen was unique, as she retained her own establishment of house and attendants, which were on an equality with that of a king. She alone of the wives appeared in public and as the consort of a god. The attributes of a goddess were supposed to be predominant in her in her gift of magic and in her power over invisible beings. By her magical incantations and prayers she assisted her husband in his sacrifices, and warded off malignant deities. She attended with her husband in public functions, and was invested with regal powers while he was absent from the capital on wars or otherwise. And she possessed the hereditary right to act as regent during the minority of the successor to the throne.

We find an instance of the highest position held by women in Queen Hatshepsu, who, according to her father's will, reigned with her brother Thothmes II. On the death of the latter, which was probably brought about by the sister, since we find her obliterating his name from all public monuments, Hatshepsu became the sole ruler, and reigned for twenty years. She was a most capable woman, and has been likened to Catherine II of Russia.[2] She enriched Thebes with buildings, gave her country the blessings of peace, and carried through one great expedition to the regions of the Red Sea. Like Catherine she had her favourites, the statue of the chief of them, Senmut by name, being now in the Berlin Museum, with the grateful inscription that he owed to the

[1] Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization* (1901), p. 51. Also Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (1894), p. 154.

[2] Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 43.

queen his position of "chief of chiefs in the whole of Egypt." She was probably herself put out of the way by her brother and successor, Thothmes III, who had her name struck out of all monuments, thus retaliating upon her in her own way with the elder brother.

AMUSEMENTS AND THE HAREM

We have referred above to the harem. Only the Pharaohs and the rich could indulge in these expensive luxuries. There was practically no limit to the extent of the harem of the Pharaohs, the women comprising it being kept in strict seclusion under the control of an old matron. It is recorded in the case of Amenhotep III that he was presented by a certain prince with his eldest daughter and three hundred and seventeen maidens. It was the duty of these women to amuse the Pharaoh, it may be with music, or song, or dance, or with a game of draughts, which was a favourite pastime with these ancients. Such amusements we find depicted in the representations of the harem of Ramses III, where the monarch is also seen among his ladies being regaled by them with fruit and flowers.

It is known that when not in the seclusion of the harem ladies also amused themselves with archery.[1] They were fond of boating, and they even at times accompanied their husbands in their sporting expeditions. The Egyptian paid a due regard to hospitality, and the entertainment of one's friends was carried out with all the formalities of a modern day dinner-party, wherewith were combined games and such talent in dancing and music as was commensurate with the rank and wealth of the enter-

[1] Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. ii., p. 189.

tainer. At such feasts it was unfortunately not uncommon for the ladies, as well as the men, to do more than justice to the excellence of their host's wine-cellar.[1]

Music and dancing constituted a special profession, to which women belonged as well as men; indeed, the women were preferred as dancers.[2] Training in music included a knowledge of a variety of instruments, the chief of which were the harp, guitar, lyre, flute and the pipes, and women performers appear on the paintings equally with the men. The social status of the dancing women was probably no higher than it is in all Oriental countries at the present day. It was their special sphere to minister to the entertainment of the rich, and their rhythmic movements and graceful steps and figures were brought to perfection by prolonged training. In the pictures extant these women are depicted as going through their performances in the scantiest of clothing of the most transparent texture, or even in a state which was practically nude, with only a narrow ornamentation of beads round their hips.

WOMEN'S DRESS AND ADORNMENT

The Egyptians were as sternly ruled by the iron rod of fashion as any modern woman, and much time and care were given to their toilet. If at one time the skirts were scanty, they would assuredly be replaced soon after by voluminous and flowing robes; and again after that we shall find folds like the modern kilting replacing the previous fashions. Under the Old Empire there was only a short skirt round the hips; in the Middle Empire another was added, and

[1] Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. ii., pp. 167–8.
[2] Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt*, vol. i., p. 525.

in the New Empire the breasts were also covered.[1] As soon as fashions were imitated by the lower classes, the kings and nobles who set them changed theirs and took to something new; and so after all the history of dress is merely a repetition from age to age.

With these people their clothes marked the rank of the wearer even more than they do at the present day. At first it was a simple piece of white cloth folded round the figure, as we see in the statue of Nofret; it was a tight-fitting garment without a fold, designed, as it were, to show every movement of the supple form beneath. This simple attire at first reached just below the breast, and it was held up by shoulder-straps which always matched the dress in colour. The dress was sometimes varied by an embroidered hem at the top and bottom, which was either wholly or partially beaded in the case of women of high estate, the shoulder-straps being replaced by bands. Their coiffure was varied and extensive. There were the braided locks, or, in the case of deficient hair, the carefully arranged wigs with their love-curls on either side. The statues of Nofret, it would seem, were designed to show such diversity in coiffure. In one she is represented with a heavy wig with curls on either side; in another the wig is just as heavy, and is bound by a fillet and cut short on the sides.

Under the Middle Empire the change in dress was very slight. The neck of the garments, instead of being V-shaped, was cut round, and thus showed off to perfection the jewelled necklace; and a second article of dress was adopted, the right arm being bare and a diaphanous cloak with embroidered hem being fastened in front over the breast. The hair of this

[1] Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (1894), p. 201.

period was braided in numerous tiny plaits, and head ornaments came into fashion. There were about thirty or forty of these plaits gathered into coils, one being allowed to fall at the back and one on each side of the face; or, again, these plaits are seen continuously to hang round the head. The diaphanous cloak gave place subsequently to a garment with a short sleeve on the left arm, and finally was evolved the thick under-dress surmounted by a cloak which has a striking resemblance to those worn by ladies in modern times in the evening. There was also at this time another style that consisted of a dress with two sleeves and a short mantilla, with an apron from neck to foot. The servants and peasant women were most simply clad in a plain skirt. Very fine white linen was the favourite material, and best adapted, too, to the heat of the country and to the desire for cleanliness. In the earlier times coloured clothing was more freely used, but later this was gradually discarded for the emblem of purity.

Jewels were a popular form of adornment both for men and women, but women naturally adopted them to a much larger extent, and we find necklaces, armlets and bracelets, and, in later times, earrings, freely used. The earrings were artistically formed into the shape of serpents, or bore as pendants the heads of animals or of goddesses.[1] A massive necklace adorns the neck of Nofret in her representations, and it would appear to be of exquisite workmanship. Kohl was used for the eyes, both to heighten their charm and to protect them from ophthalmia, so prevalent in the country. The nails were frequently died with henna, and perfumed pastilles of honey were taken to sweeten the breath.

[1] Rawlinson, *History of Ancient Egypt*, vol. i., p. 538.

Whether as an adornment, or as a substitute for nature's deficiency, wigs were universally used, as the statues and pictures show, and many of these wigs are now in our museums. Judging by the prominent place the care of the hair takes in their *materia medica*, and by the representations of heads that we see piled high with braided locks or fantastically hung round in coils or in thin long plaits, we must believe that hair-dressing was an art highly esteemed by these ancient Egyptians. The Old Empire was the period for short coiffure, and for great occasions the erections for the head were as artistic as those we might see at a modern hair artiste's establishment; indeed, the wig-maker's art must have been in great request. As a rule very little of the forehead was visible, the little curls beginning, in some instances, very low down. The women of all classes preferred long locks, and when these were naturally deficient, art was invariably resorted to according to the means of the lady. Fringes, ribbons, bands, and other adornments were requisitioned to heighten the effect of these artistic productions, and the pictures now extant in the various museums give us a graphic idea as to the length the feminine fancy and fashion in hair-dressing led the Egyptian lady. The wigs were sometimes not even composed of human hair, any suitable wool being used, or even a mixture.

If from the head we turn to the feet, we find that in the Old and Middle Empires shoes were rarely worn. Little sandals came in with the New Empire, and the ladies then also showed a partiality for anklets. In this connection we find the pretty legend of the tiny shoe of the rosy-cheeked queen Nitokris,[1] which is practically our story of Cinderella of fairy lore. It is

[1] Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization* (1901), p. 438.

related of her that whilst bathing an eagle flew away with one of her gilded sandals and dropped it into the lap of the king at Memphis, who immediately caused a search to be made for the maiden who owned such tiny feet, and made her his queen although she was but a courtesan.[1] For thousands of years her spirit was said to haunt her sarcophagus, and in naked form she would appear abroad and attract by her smile and send mad with love the passer-by who chanced to see her.

From the pictures that have come down to us we are led to assume that the complexions of the women were of a pale yellow, and that the Egyptians were not a dark race. The women of the better classes who were exempt from toil and exposure were all thus painted yellow, the tint getting paler as they rose in the social scale. And to the beauty of the skin was attached as much importance as to dress. Artificial means of painting and rougeing were resorted to freely, the beauty of the skin being enhanced by the frequent use of oil and perfumes, in the preparation of which much ingenuity was exercised; parts of the body were even tattooed. A picture in the Turin papyrus gives us a comic insight into a lady's toilet, with her rouge pot and brush and mirror in hand, applying the rouge to cheeks and lips. The eyes were coloured to represent the eye of heaven, or the moon shining in the depth of night; it was also, as already stated, a protection against ophthalmia. Cosmetics were a very important item in the Egyptian lady's toilet; and their physicians, judging by their medical literature, must have been great specialists in hair. At least they pretended to be such, and their prescriptions against the hair turning grey, against its

[1] Strabo, xvii. I, § 33, p. 808.

falling off, even against the luxuriant growth of a rival, are grotesque in the extreme. It is comforting to feel that the machinations of one physician against a beautiful head of hair could be circumvented by the rival's own doctor, if he were clever enough to know the certain antidote of tortoise-shell, boiled, pounded and mixed in the fat of a hippopotamus. The application of this, to be efficacious, was ordered "very, very often."[1]

CLEOPATRA

Though our curiosity is excited by much of the unearthed civilization of Egypt, we must admit to a lack of historical data to enable us to present a biographical memoir, or details of interest, affecting specific Egyptian women. We must therefore glide over centuries until we come to the period just prior to which the mighty line of the Pharaohs came to a termination, when Egypt was engulfed as a province of the great Roman Empire. The last of that line to sit on the throne were the marvellous woman Cleopatra and her son Caesarion.

Cleopatra was the daughter of Ptolemy XI, Auletes, by a woman on whose name history is silent. She was but seventeen when she ascended the throne, in 51 B.C., jointly with her brother Ptolemy XII, and early gave promise of following in the footsteps of the queens of the Ptolemaic line by establishing her ascendancy in the affairs of the country. At first the local intrigues were too much for her, and she had to fly to Syria, where she raised an army to get the better of her brother and his advisers. Her warlike preparations led to nothing, but circumstances soon turned

[1] Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt* (1894), pp. 232–3.

in her favour by the arrival of Caesar in Alexandria; and though the treacherous assassination of Pompey after his flight from Pharsalus would seem to have pointed to the need of his presence elsewhere against the Pompeian combination, yet the dispute between Cleopatra and her brother gave an excuse for remaining in the country to restore peace, and he at once espoused the cause of Cleopatra against her brother, and became involved in the embarrassing meshes of the Alexandrine war, which he ultimately carried to a successful termination.

Though ancient writers are not quite agreed as to the physical and mental charm of Cleopatra, there can be little doubt that she was possessed of both in a remarkable degree.[1] And she certainly knew how to utilize those charms in her own interests, and determined to try them on Caesar, whom report made out as specially susceptible to such fascinations. Her first interview with Caesar reads like a story in the *Arabian Nights*.[2] With her attendant, Apollodorus, she approached the palace in the dusk, in a small boat, and despairing of an *entrée* without recognition, she submitted to be tied in a sack and to be thus carried by her attendant into the presence of Caesar, whose admiration was so fired by this ingenious and daring stratagem that he was only too pleased to continue the audience until dawn, and gave willing ear to the pleadings of her cause which the "golden-tongued" queen knew how to advance in her charming and seductive way. Cleopatra had gained her victory, and Caesar was henceforward her adorer and her slave.

[1] Dion Cassius, xli. 34. Plutarch, *Antonius*, 27, however, says that her beauty was not altogether striking, though he admits her charm of manner and the sweetness of her voice.

[2] Plutarch, *Caesar*, 49.

Mansell

CLEOPATRA

FROM THE BUST IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Caesar's troubles, however, now began, for Ptolemy, resenting the intimacy between Caesar and his sister, carried on an opposition with varying success, with the Alexandrians at his back, until he was finally defeated after a nine months' struggle and drowned. Cleopatra thus became the practical ruler of the country, with her younger brother as nominal husband and joint regent. The turmoils of war being over, Cleopatra and Caesar were at liberty to enjoy the brief respite of a pleasure trip up the Nile. Her luxurious boat, decked out with true Eastern magnificence, conveyed the two lovers under an escort of four hundred ships; and it was only on the army refusing to follow them into Ethiopia that they cut short their raptures.[1] But it was for a time only. Caesar had important duties elsewhere, and when these were satisfactorily carried through, Cleopatra, her husband, and her son by Caesar, called Caesarion, were invited to Rome, where she remained with her lover until his assassination, when she returned again to Egypt.

The seductiveness of Cleopatra had yet another victory to claim, and to gain her ambitious ends she employed all the artifice of her charm, all the vast wealth at her command. As Caesar had been drawn into her meshes, so it was now the turn of Mark Antony. After long dallying with the commands of Antony to appear before him to answer a charge of having aided Cassius, the Republican, against the triumvirs, she at length sailed up the Cydnus to meet him, and the scene depicted by Plutarch[2] is sufficiently bewildering in its magnificence and fairy-like beauty to have turned the head of the

[1] Suetonius, *Caesar*, 51.

[2] Plutarch, *Antonius*, 26.

most adamantine of mortals. It had its effect. Her gilded boat with royal purple sails moved softly over the water to the rhythm of silver oars and soft music. The air wafted from the banks was filled with the most wondrous of perfumes. Under the golden awning reclined Cleopatra in the garb of Aphrodite, fanned by attendant Cupids; while the most beautiful of slaves paced the decks as Nereids and Graces. Cleopatra had come and she conquered, and she carried her victim with her to Alexandria. Here Antony became an absolute slave to her, so infatuated was he with this woman of boundless ambition and insatiable passions, which she knew how to use with the most unerring effect. The life they lived together was one of licentious freedom, and every behest of Cleopatra was carried out, even to the murder of those of her family who were too closely allied to her to suit her ambitious ends. The pageants of her court were so lavish and extravagant that Antony, in his amazement, offered a wager that she could never exceed an enormous sum he named on a banquet. She won the wager by melting a pearl of exceeding price in vinegar and then draining the cup herself.[1]

That Antony was "bewitched by that accursed woman," as Octavianus said of him,[2] there could be no doubt, and it was with difficulty that he could be made to take an interest in the affairs of state. Though he returned to Italy and married Octavia, the sister of Octavian, with whom he lived for some time, his return to Syria in 37 B.C. brought back with redoubled fury his passion for Cleopatra, whom he immediately invited to him. The anticipated arrival of Octavia to join her husband brought out in Cleopatra the pent-

[1] Pliny, ix. 58. [2] Dion Cassius, i. 26.

up determination of her soul to have Antony to herself, and her crafty cunning in giving herself away to a pretended despair ended in Antony sending Octavia back from Athens and taking Cleopatra to himself. He gave himself up entirely to a life of Eastern pomp and splendour in Alexandria under the guidance and the lavish magnificence of Cleopatra, who now, in her garb, was wont to personate the goddess Isis, and she carried her buffoonery to the extent of dressing up Antony as Osiris and Dionysus.

We come to the closing scenes of this drama when the Roman Senate declared war against Antony and Cleopatra. The rival fleets met at Actium in the year 31 B.C., after Cleopatra and Antony had gone through much feasting at Samos and Athens while collecting their fleet and army. In the battle which ensued the ships of Cleopatra began to withdraw, and on seeing this Antony, enervated no doubt by his recent life of debauchery, lost heart, and entering a galley with but two attendants slunk away from the fight after her. The final scene is enacted at Alexandria, where the lavish feastings and splendour are again repeated until Octavianus arrives in Egypt. Though Antony was prepared to fight, his troops went over to Octavian through the treachery of Cleopatra, who herself fled to a magnificent tomb which she had prepared and filled with her vast treasures. Here she received Antony, who was dragged up through the window by cords, half dead from his self-inflicted wound, to breathe his last in the presence of his mistress, who had been the unmaking of him by a seductive and irresistible charm of manner which almost passes comprehension.

Befitting the extraordinary life of this queen was her heroic death. Determined not to be degraded by

adorning the triumph of her conqueror, and finding that she had failed, in an interview, to bewitch Octavian as she had previously bewitched Caesar and Antony, her set purpose now was to bow her mighty head to the conqueror of all mortals—Death. By her artful cunning she warded off suspicion of her intention, and after performing her final service at the tomb of Antony, she had a bath and then a sumptuous feast. The last scene is best told by Shakespeare, who makes Cleopatra in her full queenly attire pass to the great Unknown by, as is commonly believed, the bite of an asp. Her attendant Iras first falls and dies to show her the way:

> If thou and nature can so gently part,
> The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
> Which hurts, and is desired.[1]

And so she applies an asp to her breast and another to her arm, and thus passes away this marvellous woman, in whom ambition and passion combined to make playthings of the world's heroes. Her other attendant, Charmian, also followed her royal mistress in the manner of her death.

Octavian was thus cheated of the principal ornament of his triumph, for which a lay figure had to do duty with an asp clinging to the arm. He, however, respected her last request and had her entombed royally with Antony, a fitting end to so illustrious a woman—

> Bravest at the last,
> She levelled at our purposes, and being royal,
> Took her own way.[2]

So striking and dramatic was the life of Cleopatra that it has been one of the most popular subjects for the modern drama. There are about thirty plays ex-

[1] Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act v., sc. 2.
[2] *Ibid.*

tant in various languages,—sixteen of which are in French alone, beginning with the *Cleopatra* of Jodelle.

Such was the woman who, at times arrogant and cruel, and even treacherous, was always a slave to her passions and to her ambitions, and by her intense magnetic influence had the power of enslaving others to her person. Even in her death she did not forget to act a part

> fitting for a princess
> Descended of so many royal kings.[1]

CHALDAEAN WOMEN

STATUS AND DUTIES OF WOMEN

In these days of women's rights and women's demand for the franchise it is interesting to note the immense power held by women in Babylonia thirty centuries ago. The dowry system which gave the woman rights over her own property, and the great influence of wealth in the country, made of her an independent actor in her own affairs; and in the documents that have come down to us we find married women transacting business which in modern states comes mainly within the province of men. We find them selling their own property,[2] entering into partnership and trade, conducting lawsuits even against their own husbands for the unauthorized disposal of their property, and mulcting them in damages; they are also parties to the lending of money and to the purchase of slaves. In fact, in all matters of business rights there would appear to be no difference between the man and the woman in the eyes of the law.

[1] Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act v., sc. 2.

[2] Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization* (1901), p. 737, n. 5. See also A. H. Sayce (1893), *Social Life among the Assyrians and Babylonians*, p. 150.

This masculine propensity in business matters in no way affected the womanly character of their duties within their domestic sphere. Like all Eastern nations to the present day, it devolved on the women of the household to attend to the material wants of husband and children. Cooking and baking, the grinding of corn, the fetching of water, spinning and weaving, are all feminine duties which fell to the woman, and she did not spare herself. Where, in the case of great wealth or nobility, the women were beyond the cares of life, their independence of movement was necessarily restricted, and in emerging from their homes to make visits, or to attend festivals, these high-born ladies were so hemmed in by attendant slaves that they scarcely mixed with the outside world. With them it meant the seclusion of the harem in a slightly modified form.

DRESS AND ADORNMENT

The looms of Babylonia were famous all the world over in the period of its ascendancy, and thus we have mention in the Bible of the "goodly Babylonish garment" which took the fancy of Achan in the spoils of Jericho, bringing on him and his household the punishment of death. Though the style of dress was itself simple, the Chaldaeans were fond of patterns and colours, and their wardrobes were filled with a variety quite large enough to suit the fancies of the most fastidious modern lady. The materials used were either imported, as the Indian muslin, or manufactured locally, the latter being a rough woollen stuff. The female costume differed little from that worn by the men. It consisted of an under-garment from the waist downwards in the form of a petticoat, over which was thrown an "abayah" or cloak which covered the

shoulders and was wound round the body. The place of the latter was sometimes taken by a dress fastened round the waist with a belt. Much feminine ingenuity was expended in the ornamentation of these robes with fringes and patterns, according to the status and wealth of those wearing them. The boots were of soft leather without heels, and they were laced. The heads of women as we see them in the pictures show that the hair was twisted into plaits, with a ribbon round the forehead; these plaits were allowed to fall over the back of the head, or again were twisted into one big coil. Though ornaments were worn by both men and women, those of the latter were more numerous and took the form of bracelets, necklaces, anklets, and rings for the ears and fingers.[1]

EDUCATION

It follows from what we know of the independence allowed to women that the Babylonians permitted them the privileges of education. In this matter they were far ahead of modern Eastern nations, and we find evidence in their contract tablets that women appearing in lawsuits or conducting commercial transactions[2] were called upon to sign their names to documents, and this would carry no weight unless they were able to read and understand the purport of the deeds.

CHALDAEAN MARRIAGE

The general spirit of the laws and customs of the Chaldaeans tended to monogamy, in so far that the marriage contracts contained rigorous conditions bind-

[1] Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization* (1901), p 720.

[2] A. B. Sayce, *Social Life among the Assyrians and Babylonians* (1893), p. 42.

ing the husband and wife; and faithlessness entailed serious consequences on the party that erred. The very stringency of the custom which recognized the husband as the supreme head of the household, and preserved to the wife the full rights over her own possessions, and which, moreover, looked upon only the children of the lawful wife as legitimate heirs, left little room for the practice of polygamy in a recognized or legal form.

On the other hand, the Chaldaeans differed in no wise from other Eastern empires and nations in supplementing their fundamentally monogamous marriage conditions with concubinage, which was restricted chiefly to their female slaves. Indeed, the slave, as the chattel of her master, claimed, as of right, the favour of her master, and so universally was this looked upon as the correct arrangement that, where this special privilege was denied to the slave, magic had to be resorted to by the superstitious master to protect himself hereafter against the evil genius of the slave so rejected.[1] Though the monogamous spirit, where the slave entered into consideration, was thus practically nullified, more as a matter of duty and necessity than otherwise, the Chaldaeans among themselves held strictly as a rule to the practice of having only one wife.

The marriage of the Chaldaean girl was a solemn function; and it was so safeguarded by law and custom as to present to us in the present day an astonishing parallelism to our own modern practices in certain of its important features.

The preliminaries necessary for the marriage were of a rigorous nature. The consent of the father, as head of the household, had in the first place to be

[1] Fr. Lenormant, *Etudes Accadiennes*, vol. iii., pp. 77 78, 168–9.

obtained, as without it the law held the marriage to be null and void.[1] As we in the present day might go to a registrar, so the Chaldaean father took the prospective couple to a magistrate, before whom a formal contract was signed and sealed by the father on tables of clay, one copy of which was given to each contracting party, and a third was kept by the magistrate for record.

These contracts were elaborately drawn up in the presence of witnesses, and contained details of the property brought into the union by each party. The bridegroom made a suitable gift as payment to the parents of the girl, or, as the old Sumerian texts put it, "placed the price of the woman upon a dish and brought it to the father."[2] Half a mina, or about £4 10s., was the sum fixed by the Sumerian laws, but this was sometimes less or more according to circumstances. The girl, on her side, brought as her dowry property commensurate with her station in life, which may have included land, house, furniture, her trousseau, slaves, or money. This dowry was given by the mother if the father were dead, or if the mother were divorced and in possession of her own property. The bride also expected to receive wedding presents from her relations. It may be noted that all she brought in was her own absolute property, and no "Married Woman's Property Act" of the present day could have established her inalienable right to her belongings more effectually than these clay tablets dating fifteen centuries before our era.

[1] Rawlinson, Cun. Ins. W. As., vol. ii., pl. 9, col. iv., l. 4. *et seq.* A document also exists of the eighth year of Cyrus, king of Babylon, where the judge declares a marriage void because the consent of the bridegroom's father had not been obtained (Strassmayer, *Inschriften von Cyrus*, No. 312).

[2] Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization* (1901), p. 734, note 5.

The bride was further secured against desertion by the oath of the bridegroom that he would not take another wife while she lived, a heavy fine and the freedom of the girl with her belongings being the penalty of his failure to adhere to his contract. These were salutary precautions against the arbitrary whims of a husband lightly to desert or divorce his wife.

This civil function of the sealing of the tablets was followed by a joining of hands of the bride and bridegroom; and then came what we may look upon as the religious part of the ceremony, combined with the wedding feast at which both families joined. Evil spirits were exorcized and kept at a distance by the friends of the bridegroom circling round him and taking him thus to the bride. The priest then, with set formula, invoked the blessing of the gods on the man, and called on the man and the woman to act their parts as husband and wife. A sacrifice and purification on the following morning completed the ceremonies.[1]

DIVORCE AMONG THE CHALDAEANS

In the marriage contract of the Chaldaeans the possibility of divorce was foreseen and guarded against, and the very rigour of the conditions proclaims the essentially monogamous character of these people. There is, however, a startling difference between the action which could be taken respectively by the man or the woman. In both cases there was freedom from appeal to the decision of a properly constituted court, such as holds at the present day. The man could, as

[1] Pinches, *Glimpses of Babylonian and Assyrian Life*, III. "A Babylonian Wedding Ceremony," in the *Babylonian and Oriental Record*, vol. i., pp. 145-7.

supreme head of the household, merely turn to the wife and say, "Thou art not my wife!"[1] He would then send her back to her father's house with the equivalent in money of the dowry he had received with her. Where the dowry was large, it no doubt acted as a deterrent to any wanton act of divorce, as it returned to the wife in full, and thus deprived the husband of its benefit. The husband was, moreover, where specially stipulated, liable to pay a fine as well. In the case of a woman wanting to be rid of the marriage tie, it practically meant death. She, too, could turn to him and say, "Thou art not my husband!" But it meant that she would be flung into the river to be drowned. It is not quite clear, however, whether she was first strangled or whether she was flung alive into the river to meet her fate. The erring wife was either put to death with the sword, or, after being stripped of her clothing with the exception of a loin cloth by the husband, was cast adrift into the streets to lead a life of infamy.

ASSYRIAN WOMEN

What has been said of Chaldaean or Babylonian women practically applies to the women of Assyria; for the civilization of the Assyrians was quite dependent on the Babylonians. These latter colonized Assyria, and brought with them their civilization and their religion, their customs and their literature; and so conservative were these colonizers that, though Assyria was a rock-bound country, they adhered to the use of bricks rather than stones for their buildings. Whatever difference there was between these two peoples arose mainly from the environment in which

[1] Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization* (1901), p. 736.

their respective lives were cast. The Assyrians, from the nature of their country and of the surrounding nations, were more wild and warlike than the Babylonians; they were a stalwart and manly race of strong and cruel men. And thus it was that the Assyrian women, who were physically well-built and handsome, shared with the men the peculiar national characteristics of a love of danger inseparable from a militant race, and threw themselves heart and soul into the perilous sport of hunting, with their husbands, the lion and other dangerous animals.

The unrestrained freedom of action with regard to their movements, their business transactions, their right to inherit and to appear in courts of justice, applies to the Assyrian as to the Babylonian women of the middle and lower classes. This acknowledgment of the rights of woman cannot fail to strike us as a phenomenon which is quite out of keeping with the practice of the generality of Oriental nations, whether of ancient or modern times; it breathes, indeed, the spirit of the most advanced modern ideas of the West as to the equality of man and woman in all matters pertaining to the business life of the world. When we rise higher in the social scale this freedom diminishes in proportion to rank and wealth. Though in the eyes of the law all women were allowed the same rights of independence, their position in the higher ranks was such that they were not called upon to exercise those rights. They had all the luxury and comforts they needed; they had servants and slaves to satisfy all their wants. And with such a life of ease and comfort, what need was there for them to meddle with the sordid cares and worries of existence? Rising higher still, it is natural to find the occupants of thrones in the enjoyment of even less freedom of action.

The queens were, indeed, worst off in this respect, and their lives differed little from the lives of similar occupants of all Eastern palaces. They were restricted to a life of splendid isolation. They were content to spend their entire existence amidst luxury within the walls of the harem, coming in contact with none but members of their own family and of their household.[1] When Sargon founded his city, each of his three wives had a separate establishment in which she reigned supreme, the entrance to the harem being decorated with two gilded palm trees in bronze, an emblematic compliment to the grace and fecundity which reigned within the walls. Here the queens, surrounded by their slaves, spent their lives in amusing each other and themselves with music and feast and gossip, and such congenial tasks as embroidery, needlework, and the cares of the household. Visits from their lord, or, as a special favour, an invitation to dine with him in the hanging gardens of the palace, alone disturbed the monotony of this lifelong confinement. They were even discouraged from receiving the wives of high officials, for contact with those outside the harem assuredly introduced the dangers of intrigue, and where intrigue and treachery are an ever-present danger, wisdom dictated prevention as better than cure. Even so, other and equally insidious dangers cropped up; for, although outside influences were summarily checked, it was not always an easy matter to ensure a harmonious condition of affairs within the palace walls. Jealousy is the offspring of polygamy, and it must needs run riot where a man divides his affections and attentions. It ran its natural course in what were apparently close

[1] Maspero, *Life in Ancient Egypt and Assyria* (1892), pp. 205–8.

prisons, and frequently the numerous inmates of these secluded harems—slaves, eunuchs and wives—allowed their worst passions to have sway, and these mutual struggles, against supposed slights or inordinate favours, brought their natural sequence of crime and murder.

The houses of the Assyrians were built with flat roofs, where the women spent most of their time. This condition is prevalent even to the present day in many Eastern countries, where the house-tops are utilized as pleasant resorts open to the cool, fresh air of the mornings and evenings; and at night even for sleeping when the weather is sultry. Here the women performed all their ordinary household duties of making the bread, cooking, and washing linen; and they carried on at the same time their gossip with their neighbours on the adjoining roofs. The well-to-do who had slaves to do the drudgery for them, reclined at ease on cushions and whiled away their time with needlework or embroidery until the midday sun drove them indoors. Experience had taught them that they could keep themselves comfortably cool in underground apartments, from which the sun's rays were excluded.

The marriage ceremony of the Assyrians has much the same features as that of the Babylonians, which has been in a measure described. It was a civil function followed by a rite of domestic worship, and was performed by the father and not by the priest. The following details will be sufficient for our present purpose. The preliminaries are first arranged by private treaty between the bridegroom and the two fathers; for, after all, the essence of a business transaction underlies the ceremony. The astrologer, who no doubt has to earn a living, has assisted in

fixing a day which is declared to be auspicious, the omens being all that could be desired. The men of the two families then assemble together in gala costume, and the women collect in the harem to support the bride. The function begins by the father of the bridegroom rising and making his offer aloud to the assembled company; the father of the bride, in his turn, accepts the offer, and declares what dowry he is prepared to give with the bride. When the men present express their approval, the bride is escorted in from the harem by her women friends of the two families, and placed by the side of the bridegroom, whose father takes the hands of bride and bridegroom and, placing them palm to palm, ties them together with a woollen thread, as symbolic of the bond which unites them henceforth as husband and wife. He then proceeds to the religious part of the ceremony, which comprises invocations to the double of Nebo and of Merodach, and also of the king, to shower happiness on the future life of the couple. At the end of the prayer, all present unite with the father in tendering to the bride and bridegroom their blessings and congratulations. The Evil Eye and malignant spirits are, however, to be guarded against, for is it not just when we are happiest that these unseen influences cross our paths to trip us up? And in these assuredly we have a striking example of beliefs which have survived to the present day in the most civilized of communities. It is but the combination of magic and religion wherewith man thinks he is able, by the potentiality of his spell, prayer or incantation, to bewitch his enemy, be he visible or invisible. And the Assyrians had the antidote ready at hand in the shape of set formulas for intercepting or exhausting every such maleficent influence, and these formulas

were combined with their blessings at so auspicious an event as a marriage, thus bringing the ceremony fittingly to a close. It was the right only of a free man to go through such a ceremony, or to call upon the gods to witness a marriage celebrated in their name.

But, as with the Chaldaeans, there lay at the bottom of the ceremony the essence of a business transaction, and the peculiarly commercial instincts of the people ensured that its conditions were not left to haphazard. A scribe was there to take down on a tablet the contract, which was of a very simple character. A sample of such a contract might be of interest here, omitting the names of the parties: "A has spoken to B, saying, 'Give thy daughter C in marriage to my son D.' B has consented, and has given his daughter C one mina of silver and three servants (who are named), as well as a set of furniture and a field of eight canes, as a dowry from C to D. He has remitted to D, as a guarantee of the mina of silver, which he will pay by and by, his servant X (who is named), who is worth two-thirds of a mina, and he adds nothing as security for the other one-third of a mina still due. When he pays the mina of silver, X will be restored to him." Thus ends this document, which carried full legal force, and it was attested by witnesses who duly affixed thereto their nail-mark or seal.[1]

Though our records have given us much insight into the life and customs which prevailed among these people, who boasted of considerable civilization at this early period of the world's history, we are without the means of describing the life and character

[1] For the above description of Assyrian marriage and contract we are indebted to Maspero, *Life in Ancient Egypt and Assyria*, pp. 229–30.

of any individual Assyrian woman of historical interest, even of any of their queens. From what has been said already it must be apparent, from the secluded nature of their lives, that these queens could hardly have displayed any striking features of their personality to the outer world. Such an assertion might seem strange in the face of the marvellous accounts we have been taught of that famous Assyrian queen Semiramis. Semiramis is the Greek rendering of the Assyrian name Shammuramat; and though several Greek historians have expatiated in extravagant terms on her character and her deeds, and we have hitherto been induced to look upon her as a historical character, the cuneiform discoveries of the past half century have failed to throw any light on the existence of such a Semiramis as that portrayed by the Greek writers. Indeed, of such a person as Semiramis, first the queen of Ninus and subsequently an Assyrian queen in her own right, the monuments give us absolutely no record. It is only fair to conclude, therefore, by the light of our present sources of knowledge, that the Greeks who obtained their information, not from the Assyrians but subsequently from the Medes and Persians, dealt with a mythical personality. "It is a story of the kind that belongs not to history but to folklore, and perhaps in part to national epos, in so far as Ninus, the eponym of Nineveh, and Semiramis, the dove-woman, are persons from the Assyrian pantheon transferred to earth in human form. Ninus is probably a heroic form of Nineb, one of the most popular protecting deities of the Assyrian kings, while Semiramis (Shammuramat, meaning dove), is beyond doubt none other than the goddess Ishtar, in her double character as Lady of War and Queen of Love and Beauty—

all their thoughts were concerned with the living essence of humanity. That is why everything Greek is of paramount interest; that is why the sack of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 was such an important event in the history of the world. From the capital of the Byzantine Empire there poured forth fugitives, carrying with them the literature of the ancient Greeks, which for so long had lain forgotten, except to its eremitic guardians, in libraries and collections, but which was destined to open up a new world of light and science to the wondering nations of Europe. Italy first, and the other countries soon afterwards, extended a hand of welcome to these wandering Greeks. A new era was born, and slowly our modern civilization emerged from the darkness and ignorance of the Middle Ages.

Can we imagine that a similar Renaissance would have been the result if the libraries of Constantinople had contained the writings of Confucius and other Chinese philosophers, or records of the ancient Egyptians? Assuredly, no.

Let us compare for an instant the interest aroused by Greek writings, by Greek art, by Greek politics, with that aroused by similar phenomena among other nations, of which it would be possible to learn as much, if not more. Homer we read with our hearts, the *Nibelungenlied* merely with our eyes. The latter, like the *Edda* of the Scandinavians, or the *Vedas* of the Hindoos, cannot touch a responsive chord in our nature; we can find in these no interest which is closely associated with our own lives. But Homer's characters live and breathe; we feel that they are human, even though Diomed engages a god in battle and repulses him,[1] or Ulysses penetrates to the realms

[1] Il. v. 816, *seq.*

of the "senseless" dead.[1] In art, the Egyptians have left us numerous monuments of their skill; but who really cares about them? The grotesque and stilted figures weary us with their monotonous lifelessness, and we wonder only what could have induced them to express their ideas in such a form. Greek art, on the other hand, pulsates with life; beauty and feeling are expressed in every line, and with wondering awe and seemly reverence we drink in its surpassing loveliness. When we turn to political institutions, we find that the *Witan* is the prototype of the British Parliament, and as such of great interest to antiquarians; but a knowledge of its constitution and its powers is of little assistance for a true understanding of modern political life. The *Ecclesia*, however, of Athens, the *Boulé*, the Council of the Areopagus, and the relations of all these to one another, can throw light on the political institutions of all modern States.

Of the three great Greek historians—Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius—each was the founder of a distinctive form of history, and no subsequent historian represents a new type. The most that has been done has been to combine their excellences and their methods. So it is with the three great tragedians—Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides. Shakespeare may surpass them in the breadth of his humanity, but he is not a different type; Corneille and Racine, Goethe and Schiller admittedly follow in their steps.

And so it is in everything. The modern world may have advanced beyond the Greeks in many ways, but modern civilization is still in reality a Greek civilization. "We are all Greeks," said

[1] Od. xi.

Shelley, "our laws, our literature, our religion, our art, have their roots in Greece." The Greeks acted as we act, the Greeks thought as we think, and they were called upon to face the same questions that present themselves for solution to the modern philosopher or statesman. Problems of democracy and aristocracy, of equity and the distribution of wealth, of freedom and order, of temperance and intemperance, of man and woman, of Church and State—all these existed in the Greek world, and were discussed and re-discussed by the Greek philosophers. Even the Spartan dances, of which we shall speak later, cannot fail to be instructive. Whereas dancing to the modern mind is merely an amusement, to the ancient Greeks it had an infinitely greater significance.[1] To them it was a political institution, sacred in character, as well. The rites which accompanied the worship of the gods were distinguished, in each case, by particular dances. So it will be that, when events and customs which now captivate the attention and absorb the interest of a whole nation have long been relegated to the domain of interesting but unimportant antiquities, men will still be desirous of knowing, and still find of practical interest and importance, the observances which characterized the inhabitants of a small town in Attica or the Peloponnesus some three or four hundred years before the Christian era.

And then again we must not forget a further feature of Greek civilization—a feature which perhaps is mainly accountable for its all-pervading charm. That feature is its ideal character. Not only have

[1] For the important part played by music and dancing in the Spartan ἀγωγή, see Rowbotham, J. F., *A History of Music* (1886), ii., pp. 489 *seq.*

the Greeks given us types, they have also given us ideals. This characteristic penetrates into every portion of Greek life, and is true of political and social life no less than of art and literature.

And so, when we turn to the Greek women, we find that the working of the Greek spirit has had as great, perhaps even more marked, an effect. Not only are they interesting in themselves, they are also eternal types and they represent ideals. All the types which have appeared in later times—the woman of the Renaissance, the mediæval châtelaine, even those which might seem to be wholly modern —the suffragist[1] and the feminist,[2] have their prototypes in ancient Greece. And this is the more remarkable when it is considered that Greek civilization was essentially a man's civilization. In no period of the world's history has man reached so high a state of development: as a consequence, the women suffered by comparison, and it was the failure of the Greeks to develop their women which proved their ruin in the end. Had they developed their women as they developed their men, it is impossible to say where they would have stopped.

To the Greeks, in the first place, must be attributed the introduction of a custom which has had an almost incalculable influence in the elevation of both sexes—the custom of monogamy. To this institution they gave a religious significance,[3] and they clung to it with all the tenacity engendered by religious convic-

[1] Aristophanes wrote a play, the *Ecclesiazusae*, on the type.

[2] It was to this type that Euripides was so bitterly opposed (see p. 80).

[3] Jacobs, Friedrich, *Verm. Schriften* (1830), iv. p. 166. For the testimony of Greek writers on the sanctity of marriage, see esp. Plato, *Laws*, vi. 773 E., Plut. ii. 750 B, *γάμων καὶ σύνοδον ἀνδρὸς καὶ γυναικὸς, ἧς ἱ γένεσιν οὐδὲν ἐστιν ἱερώτερα κατάξευξις.*

tion.[1] It cannot be doubted that the low level at which Oriental civilization, except indeed among the Jews, has remained is due largely to the practice of polygamy, which has a degrading effect upon both men and women. The distinction may even be noted in the Iliad of Homer. The Trojans approximated, in this respect, though not universally, to the Oriental practice, and the household of Priam is contrasted with the married life of the Greeks.

The practice of monogamy combined with the social and political forces of the times to give to women a very high position. The age of Homer was a period of small kingdoms, in which, however, the king did not exercise the powers of an Eastern despot. The true power in society was the family, which formed in reality a community in itself. But at a later period the merging (*συνοικισμὸς*) of these separate communities produced the city-state (*πόλις*), and with this change the position of women lost its former character. The city-state was calculated, above all, to develop the male portion of the population at the expense of the female. Men alone enjoyed political rights, and the pre-eminent feature of the city-state was the intensity of political life. To the Athenian or Corinthian the city was all in all: apart from it he had no being, and in it all his interests were wrapped up.

It is not surprising, therefore, that we find the Greek woman of this period relegated to an inferior position, and considered chiefly as a factor in the political organization, in which her main functions were to be the mother of worthy citizens and to be a faithful

[1] It is true that, after great national disasters, a departure from the custom was sometimes allowed, in order that the population might increase more rapidly (Aul. Gell., *Noct. Att.*, xv. 20).

housekeeper.[1] To this general rule, however, we must make two exceptions—the Spartan woman and the courtesan (ἑταίρα). The causes which gave rise to the latter we shall consider when we come to treat of the type more fully. The *hetaerae* played so large a part in Greek life that it would be impossible, in any work dealing with Greek women, to omit all mention of them. We may here, however, briefly consider how it was that the Spartan woman was permitted the excessive liberty which characterized her, especially as the same cause had so different an effect upon the woman of Athens.

With the rise and development of the city-state, there came into Greece another force which has always profoundly affected the position of women—the force of Imperialism.[2] Just as Imperialism in modern times has, in its excessive form, produced the dominating, almost masculine, women of America and Russia, and, in its milder manifestation, the retiring and somewhat lifeless English woman, so in ancient Greece this same force occasioned the unrestricted freedom and undisputed ascendancy of the Spartan, as opposed to the rigid exclusiveness and dependent inferiority of the Athenian woman. In the case of Sparta, Imperialism had the effect of over-riding the natural tendency of development in the city-state; in Athens, on the contrary, it only aggravated it. The explanation of this seeming paradox is to be sought in the widely different conditions of opinion, feeling, habit, tradition and surroundings prevalent in the two states. Spartan and Athenian, whether man or woman, were funda-

[1] The functions of a wife, according to Athenian ideas, are clearly expressed in Pseudo-Dem., *in Neaeram*, 122. τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας (ἔχομεν) τοῦ παιδοποιεῖσθαι γνησίων καὶ τῶν ἔνδον φύλακα πιστὴν ἔχειν.

[2] I have already discussed at some length the influence exercised by this force on women in my *Imperialism* (1905), pp. 45–68.

mentally incompatible. The cleavage, plain for all to see, has been set forth by Thucydides in the funeral oration which he puts in the mouth of Pericles. It was something like a portent when races so incongruous did, for once, combine against a common foe.

To the racial and other divergencies of the women of Athens and of Sparta we must presently return; but before proceeding to discuss the life and character of the different types of Greek women, it is necessary that we should say something about their physical appearance. The evidence to be derived from Greek writers on this subject is very scanty,[1] and it is useless to look for information from the contemporaneous writers of other nations; these were almost wholly concerned with the affairs of their own countries, and paid little attention to the history of their neighbours. It cannot be doubted, however, that the Greeks as a race possessed great beauty of form and feature. So much might reasonably be assumed from the sculpture which has been preserved to us. It would be impossible to believe that such masterpieces of ideal beauty could have been produced unless the sculptor had

[1] The only passage in which a general description of the Greeks is given is from Adamantios, *Physiognomica*, c. xxiv. p. 412. He was a Christian Jew, who flourished in the beginning of the fifth century A.D. He says: "*εἰ δέ τισι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν καὶ Ἰωνικὸν γένος ἐφυλάχθη καθαρῶς, οὗτοί εἰσιν αὐτάρκως μεγάλοι ἄνδρες, εὐρύτεροι, ὀρθοί, ἐυναγεῖς, λευκότεροι τὴν χρόαν, ξάνθοι· σαρκὸς κρᾶσιν ἔχοντες μετρίαν, εὐπαγεστέραν, σκέλη ὀρθά, ἄκρα εὐφυῆ· κεφάλην μέσην τὸ μέγεθος, περιαγῆ· τράχηλον εὔρωστον· τρίχωμα ὑπόξανθον, ἀπαλώτερον, οὐλον τρόπον· πρόσωπον τετράγωνον*, (not therefore oval), *χείλη λεπτά, ῥῖνα ὀρθήν· ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑγροὺς, χαροπούς, γοργούς, φῶς πολὺ ἐχόντας ἐναύτοῖς· εὐοφθαλμώτατον γὰρ πάντων ἐθνῶν τὸ Ἑλληνικόν.*" (cf. the *ἑλίκωπες Ἀχαιοί* of Homer). See Müller, C. O., *Handbuch der Archaeologie der Kunst* (1878), p. 473, and Burckhardt, Jakob, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* herausgegeben von Jakob Oeri, iv. (1902), p. 3. Other passages speak of the beauty of particular peoples, e.g. Lucian, *imag.* ii. who says the Ionians were considered especially beautiful and, in Ionia, Smyrna had the most beautiful women: or give the requisites of individual beauty, e.g. Aelian, V. H., xii. 1, gives a description of the younger Aspasia—or are relative in point of time, e.g. Cic. *De nat. deor.* i. 28, 79, says that when he visited Athens there were very few beautiful *ephebi*.

before him, and that, too, continually, forms which, in actual life, at least approximated in some respects to that ideal. It will be interesting, therefore, to attempt a brief analysis of the distinguishing features of Greek representations of the female form, and to indicate how it was that the ideal of beauty in women was carried to a height which later generations have been unable to surpass or even to approach.

All forms of Art may, at least in their inception, be said to be experimental. A sculptor or a painter may, by his imitation or idealization of Nature, produce a work of surpassing beauty, but his justification lies in the executed work, not in the reasons which impelled him to execute it in a certain manner. Analysis is the function of the critic. "Reason," says Hazlitt, in his *Table Talk*,[1] "is the interpreter and critic of nature and genius, not their law-giver and judge." And so it will not surprise us to find that, when we wish to analyse Greek sculpture and painting, and to ascertain what constitutes its great beauty and charm, we can obtain little information from the writings of the Greeks themselves. It is certain that Greek artists must have followed rules or "canons," and of these, as they were represented by some of the Greek sculptors, we have some knowledge; but, in the main, the task of discovering these canons has been left to later generations, and a careful and minute examination of the greatest masterpieces has enabled us to deduce certain general principles which appear to be characteristic. It has been held that the Greek artists adopted the Egyptian system, in which, according to Charles Blanc, the middle finger was taken as the unit, the length of this finger

[1] Hazlitt, William, *On Genius and Common Sense* (The World's Classics, 1902), p. 39.

being contained nineteen times in the height of the body. But whether this were so or not, there can be no doubt that rules of proportion were studied and known by the Greeks. The first and most celebrated canon was that of Polycletus, a native of Argos and a contemporary of Phidias, who flourished in the latter half of the fifth century B.C. He composed a treatise on Proportions, and embodied his rules in a statue, the *Doryphorus*, or Lance-bearer, which he called his "Canon." Unfortunately, however, both the writings and the original statue are lost, but the rules laid down appear to have been generally accepted by Greek artists until they were modified by Euphranor and Lysippus in the fourth century. The modification introduced by Lysippus appears to have been a diminution of the size of the head in proportion to the rest of the body, whilst at the same time the body was made more slender.

For information, however, as to the actual practice of Greek sculptors and painters, as illustrated in the works of art which have come down to us, we must turn to modern critics. It was a German writer named Zeising[1] who first thought of applying to Greek art the principle of the mean proportional, known to mathematicians as "the golden division" (*aurea sectio*). The principle is thus stated by Zeising:[2] "If the division of a whole into unequal parts is to appear proportional, the lesser part must stand to the greater in the same proportion as the greater stands to the whole"; or, in other words, "the whole must stand to the greater part in the same

[1] Zeising, A., *Neue Lehre von den Proportionen des menschlichen Körpers* (1854).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 159.

proportion as the greater stands to the lesser." This general rule admits, of course, of many modifications, but there can be little doubt that it did form one of the canons of Greek art; and that its recognition and application was one of the chief causes of the beauty of the human form as represented in Greek sculpture and painting. Before leaving the general question of proportion, it may be said that, according to Greek ideas, female beauty demanded a certain size.[1] Nausicaa, we read, was taller than her companions.[2] Every part, in fact, should be fully developed; and we shall see that the belief in the beauty of complete development had a very great effect upon the Greek ideas of morality.

Passing now to individual features,[3] we are struck first of all by what is known as the "Greek profile."[4] This feature appears in all, or nearly all, the representations of Greek women which are left to us; and is, perhaps, the most generally recognized and most universal. By it we mean an unbroken line from the crown of the forehead to the tip of the nose. So general is it that we cannot but believe that it was the ordinary and typical formation of the Greek face. As such it is mentioned by Adamantius (*ῥὶς ὀρθή*), and Aristotle considers it the most beautiful form, adding at the same time that the *retroussé* and the Roman type can also be beautiful, provided that the divergence be not too great.[5] The forehead itself[6] is some-

[1] Arist. *Rhet.*, i. 5, 6. *θηλείων δ' ἀρετὴ σώματος μὲν κάλλος καὶ μέγεθος, ψυχῆς δὲ σωφροσύνη.*

[2] Od. vi. 109. *ὃς ἦ γ' ἀμφιπόλοισι μετέπρεπε παρθένος ἁδμής.* So Tennyson, in his *Dream of Fair Women*, calls Helen—

> "A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
> And most divinely fair."

[3] Müller, C. O., *Handbuch der Archaeologie der Kunst* (1878), pp. 467–85.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 471. [5] Arist., *Pol.* v. 7. [6] Müller, C. O., op. cit., p. 472.

what low; this was probably due to the desire to place the dividing line, marked by the eyebrows, at the spot demanded by the *aurea sectio*. The eyes[1] are set deep in the head, but the eyeballs are somewhat protruding, and become prominent when the face is regarded in profile. The mouth[2] is almost angular in shape, and the lips stand out boldly. The chin,[3] as Otfried Müller first remarked, is the surest indication of pure Greek statuary, being round and superbly formed; whilst only in the rarest instances does a dimple impart a subordinate charm. It is unnecessary to describe in detail the different parts of the trunk and limbs. Here we need only say that every part was fully developed, and that in the arms and legs, as in the whole body, the *aurea sectio* may be clearly discerned.

The above features, however, merely go to make up a whole which is beautiful in repose. This form of beauty is found in the women of other nations, more particularly in the modern Englishwoman. There is also another form of beauty, which is chiefly characteristic of the modern Frenchwoman—beauty in movement. Lessing pointed out in his *Laokoon*,[4] that Homer's method of conveying to his readers the idea of female beauty lay, not in an enumeration of individual features, but in making them sympathize with the feeling which such a form alone could arouse. So when Helen appears on the battlements of Troy,

[1] Müller, C. O., op. cit., p. 472.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 473.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 473. "*Vor allen aber (bemerken wir) das wesentlichste Merkmal echt-Griechischer Bildung, das runde und grossartig geformte kinn, welchem ein Grübchen nur sehr selten einen untergeordneten Reiz mittheilt.*"

[4] Lessing, *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie*, ch. xxi.

he makes the venerable greybeards who form the Trojan senate say to one another:

> What man can blame
> The Greeks and Trojans to endure, for so admir'd a dame,
> So many mis'ries, and so long? In her sweet count'nance shine
> Looks like the goddesses'.[1]

What could convey a more vivid idea of beauty than this recognition by passionless old age that Helen was well worth a war which was costing so much blood and so many tears? Lessing adds that poetry has a further advantage over plastic art in the portrayal of physical beauty, in that it can transform beauty into grace. "Grace is beauty in movement, and therefore more difficult for the painter than for the poet to depict. The painter can only hint at movement, but in reality his figures are without movement. Consequently, grace with him becomes a grimace. But in poetry it remains what it really is — a transitory beauty, which we wish to see repeated. It comes and goes; and as we can remember a particular movement more easily and more vividly than mere forms or colours, grace must make a proportionally stronger impression upon us than beauty alone."[2] This grace, or beauty in movement, the Greek women also possessed, and thus they had a double charm. That this form of beauty, as distinct from beauty in repose, was recognized by the Greeks themselves admits of no doubt. We find indications of it in the poets, and

[1] Il. iii. 156–8 (Chapman's translation).

[2] Lessing, op. cit., ch. xxi., "*Reiz ist Schönheit in Bewegung, und eben darum dem Maler weniger bequem als dem Dichter. Der Maler kann die Bewegung nur erraten lassen, in der That aber sind seine Figuren ohne Bewegung. Folglich wird der Reiz bei ihm zur Grimasse. Aber in der Poesie bleibt er, was er ist, ein transitorisches Schönes, das wir wiederholt zu sehen wünschen. Es kommt und geht; und da wir uns überhaupt einer Bewegung leichter und lebhafter erinnern können, als blosser Formen oder Farben, so muss der Reiz in dem nämlichen Verhältnisse stärker auf uns wirken als die Schönheit.*"

hints of it too in the plastic and ceramic arts. It is chiefly shown in what the French call "les attaches," i.e. the places where one member is joined to another, or where a muscle is attached to a bone.[1] It is in the proper execution of these *attaches* that an artist's true claim to genius lies. Upon them depend the free play of the muscles and the graceful movement of the limbs. The beauty of the arms, wrists, and ankles, of the neck, and especially of the shoulders, is due not so much to the formation of those parts as to their movements. Homer had observed this, and so he speaks of "fair-armed" virgins,[2] and draws attention to the beauty of a woman's ankles.[3] So too when Ulysses is cast on the shore of Phaeacia and discovered by Nausicaa, Athene, to make him appear beautiful in her eyes, "poured grace" over his shoulders, as well as his head,[4] for Homer well knew that it is in the shoulders that grace chiefly lies. Again, when Antenor is comparing the form of Ulysses with that of Menelaus, he says that when both were standing Menelaus' shoulders towered above those of Ulysses, but that when both were sitting Ulysses was the more majestic.[5] We know, therefore, that Homer

[1] Larousse, *sub voce, attache:* "*Peint. et sculpt. Endroit où un membre est joint à un autre, où un muscle s'attache à un os.*"

[2] In the Iliad this epithet (λευκώλενοι) is applied only to Hera (i. 195, 208, 572, 595; v. 711, 755, 767, 775, 784; viii. 350, 381, 484; xiv. 277; xv. 78, 92, 130; xix. 407; xx. 112; xxi. 377, 418, 434, 512; xxiv. 55); to Andromache (vi. 371, 377; xxiv. 723); and to Helen (iii. 121). In the Odyssey it is applied to Nausicaa (vi. 101, 186, 251; vii. 12); to Arete (vii. 233, 335); and in three passages generically (vi. 239; xviii. 198; xix. 60). The Elizabethan translator, Chapman, preferred to construe it "fair-wristed."

[3] This epithet (καλλίσφυρος) is applied in the Iliad to Marpessa (ix. 553, 556); and to Danae (xiv. 319). In the Odyssey it is applied to Hebe (xi. 603); and to Ino (v. 333).

[4] Od. vi. 235 ὃς ἄρα τῷ κατέχευε χάριν κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ὤμοις. Cf. also Od. viii. 18, 19:

τῷ δ' ἄρ' Ἀθήνη
θεσπεσίην κατέχευε χάριν κεφαλῇ τε καὶ ὤμοις.

[5] Il. iii. 210, 211.

Στάντων μὲν, Μενέλαος ὑπείροχεν εὐρέας ὤμους,
Ἀμφω δ' ἑζομένω, γεραρώτερος ἦεν Ὀδυσσεύς.

Mansell.

THE VENUS OF MILO

AT THE LOUVRE

had also marked the effect of different proportions in the human body. That is why Homer has been so great a source of inspiration for sculptors. How different is the case of the heroes and heroines of the *Eddas*, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, or the *Nibelungenlied!* In these poems we hear only of marvellous attributes—golden hair and diamond eyes: attributes which convey no definite meaning, and help us in no way to picture their possessors to ourselves.

We have seen then that beauty, in women especially, consists, firstly, in the fine lines of each organ, so that every feature is distinctive; and, secondly, in well-developed *attaches*. Both together make *une femme bien découplée*: and that was the Greek woman. To see such beauty in its highest form we have only to look at the Greek sculpture, at terra-cotta figures such as those discovered in the tombs of Tanagra during the latter half of last century, and at the representations of women on Greek vases. In sculpture, the best known and at the same time the most beautiful is the wonderful statue usually called the "Venus of Milo" at the Louvre in Paris. This statue is universally considered to be the most perfect representation of female beauty in the world. On seeing that statue the first time, most people will be neither struck very much by it nor feel that enthusiasm for its consummate beauty which cannot arise but in him who knows how to appreciate this incomparable woman. The goddess is naked to the waist; and against the nudity of her upper half stands out the chaste draping and enveloping garment of the nether body. She has, to-day, no arms. Although it is certain that she represents Venus, it is yet not known in what pose she originally was conceived to be. The arms, the greater portions of which are still extant, have been variously

"restored" to the body; but no proposal as to how the arms should be "posed" has as yet been found satisfactory. The face is typically Greek: the forehead low; the profile severe; the eyes projecting; the temples tender yet distinctly outlined; the cheeks, those inimitable Hellenic cheeks, with their lower outline almost forming a right angle, and with the fleshy side full of blossoming youth; the chin superb, bold, pouting, proud; the neck long and strong with several faintly indicated circular lines gracefully breaking and accentuating it; the shoulders well cooped out and undulating; the part of the bust proper, wide and swelling; the two breasts full, round, charmingly pouting one another; the trunk of the mighty body swelling with unutterable beauty into the hips; finally, the back has the famous *chute du dos* without which the finest exuberance of flesh falls short of real beauty.

Had that unique statue nothing but the features and lines which we have attempted, ever so dimly, to describe in the foregoing remarks, she would form a very fine specimen indeed of physical charm, but would still be far from the ideal. What makes the Venus of Milo the supreme work of art it is must be found in her expression. After having looked at her or studied her for years, one is quite unable to say whether she is a young maiden or a mature woman; whether timid chastity or severe pride prevail in her. While her mouth in its exquisite bloom of form, youthful and delicate, seems to invite the kiss of love, the corners of that mouth at once strike awe into the looker-on. The Venus of Milo is a woman—the woman of all women; yet she is a goddess. She is evidently, in traits, expression, pose, and dignity, a person immortal, dwelling amongst the "ever-living,

serene gods of Olympus." She is human and superhuman. Not a desire of man's darkest or most ideal longings for womanhood but could be satisfied by a woman such as the Lady of Milo; and yet no man would ever dare to approach her with any serious hope of winning her. When a mature man looks at her he feels, like Heinrich Heine, a faintness in his heart, and wants to drop down, as Heine did, at the feet of the woman who, more than any other, reminds him of all the dreams and disillusions, passions and pangs, of all the paradise and regret of Love. In that noble face shining in all the lustre of the white Pentelic marble what disquieting mixture of sweetness and rigour! The fleshy parts are velvety and full of the mildness of spring, while the lines of the bones are severe and forbidding. In her we may see all the types of women, more particularly all the types of Greek women. She has the fine cheek of the Athenian, with her expression of meek and yielding sweetness. She has the exquisite shoulders of the women of Bœotia, more especially those of Tanagra. She has the severe and bold expression, together with the firm and perfectly rounded breast of the Spartan maiden. In her magnificent basin, where the immortality of the human race is confirmed, there is the chastity of Penelope and the fertility of the women of Sicily. Women in Greece have, unless indirectly, played no great part. Yet is it possible to look at a statue at once so beautiful and so true without admitting that what the Venus of Milo expresses actually, must have, potentially, existed in many a Greek woman? No Scopas nor Phidias can simply invent such traits. He must have seen them. For if there is in the Venus one thing greater than another, it is the truth, the reality of the statue. It

breathes truth; it is talking, moving, smiling, threatening. In it, as in all great Greek statuary, there is a profound and eternal psychological verity: the nature of refined womanhood.

But perhaps the strongest and most important evidence of the artistic sense of the Greeks, and at the same time of the beauty of the Greek women in general, is to be found in the *figurines* or statuettes of terra-cotta, such as those which have been discovered in the tombs of Tanagra[1] within the last thirty or forty years. These represent chiefly women engaged in the occupations of daily life; and it is probable that many of them are portraits and not idealized forms. It is noticeable, too, that these statuettes were found near Thebes, in Bœotia; they are therefore the workmanship of a people who had, till their discovery, been regarded as sharing only to a small extent in the general æsthetic culture of the Greek world. The large numbers in which they have been found prove that they cannot have been very costly, but were probably in the possession even of the poorer classes; it is obvious therefore that they could not have been the work of any famous sculptor. And yet such small imperfections of detail and treatment as may exist are scarcely noticed beside the extraordinary beauty of design and the almost inimitable grace which characterize them. We may notice in particular that great skill and care is shown in the execution of

[1] The following literature on the Tanagra figures may be mentioned: Heuzey, Leon, "Récherches sur les terres cuites grècques," in *Mon. assoc. des étud. grec.* (1876); Kepulé, *Griechische Thonfiguren aus Tanagra* (1878); Curtius, E., *Giebelgruppen aus Tanagra* (1878); Delauney, *Terres cuites de Tanagra*, in *Revue de France* (May and June, 1878); Rayet, *Les figurines de Tanagra*, (*Louvre*) in *Gaz. des B. Arts*, (1878); Martha, *Figurines de Tanagra*, in *Bull Cor. Hell.* (1880), pp. 71–5; Furtwaengler, Adolf, *La Collection Sabouroff* (1883–7); Huish, M. B., *Greek Terra-Cotta Statuettes* (1900).

the *attaches*, which gives them a wonderful grace. The way a woman, represented sitting on a sofa with her female visitor opposite to her, is turning her head a little sideways, or is holding her fan, wins most of its grace by the finely indicated *attaches* on the nether arm, or neck. What Lessing used to call "the fertile point"—that is, the moment which, if well represented by the sculptor, permits us to divine both what preceded and what will follow it—that moment is most felicitously caught in nearly all figurines of Tanagra. Hence the pose of these little terra-cotta women is in reality a movement, a life of their own. Even in the smallest of them we note that carefully developed sense of proportion in the length of the neck, the arms, the legs. With sometimes inimitable grace the hair of the terra-cotta maiden is rendered full of expression by a garland of ivy leaves; and the drapery and folds of the light garments, undoubtedly imitated from that of famous statues, makes the gown drizzle down on the tender limbs. The expression of all these women is in the highest degree pleasing: modest, meek, sweet, yet timidly proud and anxious for their female dignity.

Of ceramic art,[1] specimens may be seen in almost every museum and many private collections. The style of painting on vases always retained among the Greeks a somewhat archaic character, and a certain conventionality of treatment. This is especially noticeable in the vases of the latter half of the fifth century B.C., when compared with sculpture of the

[1] For literature on the ceramic art of Greece, see Newton, C. T., *Catalogue of Greek Vases, British Museum* (1851–70); Klein, W., *Griechische Vasen* (1887); Harrison, J. E., and MacColl, D. S., *Greek Vase Paintings* (1894); Reinach, S., *Repertoire des Vases peints grecs et etrusques* (1899–1900); Furtwaengler, A., and Reichhold, K., *Griechische Vasenmalerei* (1900), etc.

same period. In the fourth century, however, there appear more softness and grace both in drawing and composition, and the beauty of some of the paintings is extraordinary. There are in the British Museum two specimens of vase painting in which the women are depicted with a wonderful charm. One of them is an *amphora* from Camirus in Rhodes, on which is represented the final triumph of Peleus in his pursuit of Thetis. The other is a cylix from a Rhodian tomb, on the inside of which is a drawing of Aphrodite seated upon the back of a flying swan. The head of the goddess has an exquisite grace and loveliness, and presents, perhaps, the most perfect representation, in this form of art, of the Greek profile to which we have alluded above.

The earliest picture we have of Greek life is contained in the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer.[1] In these poems women occupy a position and are treated with a respect which were quite unknown in later historical times, and caused, indeed, much surprise and adverse criticism among the Athenians of the fifth century.[2] The chief characters presented to us are, of course, the wives and daughters of chieftains; but women of a lower grade also appear and do not suffer by comparison. "There is not in the whole of the poems," wrote the late Mr. Gladstone,[3] "an instance of rude or abusive manners towards women as such, or of liberties taken with them in the course of daily life. If Melantho gets hard words, it is not as a

[1] In addition to the general works mentioned above, see also Camboulin, F. R., *Les Femmes d'Homère* (1854); and Gladstone, W. E., *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age* (1858), ii. pp. 479–520; Sault, C. de, *Les femmes grecques au temps d'Homère*, in *Revue Germanique*, t. xxiv.

[2] Burckhardt, Jakob, *Griech. Kulturgesch.* iv. (1902), p. 241.

[3] Gladstone, W. E., *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age* (1858), ii. p. 502.

woman, but for her vice and insolence. The conduct of the Ithacan suitors to Penelope, as it is represented in the Odyssey, affords the strongest evidence of the respect in which women were held." If, however, we look at the legal position of women in Homeric times, we find that they were in a position little better than that of slaves. In fact, the fortune of war might at any time reduce them to that position in actual name. Cassandra and Andromache, kings' daughters though they were, did not escape the indignity of becoming the absolute property of their captors. There was always an uncertainty about their future which rendered them entirely dependent upon men, and so we find that they were above all meek and submissive. Partly perhaps in consequence of this, they were permitted an almost unrestricted liberty of action. Though they had their separate part of the house, they were not confined to it, but could at any time join the men in the common room, or leave the house to walk in the streets or market-place. Helen at Troy watched the progress of the fight from the battlements, attended only by a few handmaidens.[1] The young men and maidens mingled freely at the wine-presses,[2] and in the public dancing-place.[3] There was, in fact, untrammelled intercourse between the sexes.

The education of the young girl consisted mainly in listening to the advice of the elders, and in hearing the chants of the bards. They learnt from example rather than by precept. The mother taught them the household tasks of spinning and weaving (*ἱστὸν ἐποίχεσθαι*), and even princesses considered it no disgrace to make and wash the clothes of the household.[4]

[1] Il. iii. 150.
[2] Il. xviii., 590–4.
[3] Il. xviii. 567–8.
[4] Od. vi. 150.

They relieved the monotony and tedium of their tasks by singing; and dancing was both indulged in as a form of exercise, and practised as a part of the rites which accompanied the worship of the gods. Marriage was considered incumbent upon everybody, man or woman, but a widow, as a general rule, was not expected to marry again.[1] No mention is made of divorce. The table of propinquity, within which, according to Christian ordinance and custom, marriage is not allowed, did not then exist; but connection by blood, or affinity, was regarded as a bar to marriage. Parents had the power of disposing of their children of either sex, and marriage was an arrangement between the bridegroom and the father of the bride. It was, in fact, as among all early nations, a form of purchase, the bridegroom paying either in goods or money (ἔδνα, ἕεδνα). Sometimes the purchase money was remitted, and we hear of cases in which contributions were made by the family of the bride. The wife's chief duties were the control of the housework and the care of the children; childlessness was regarded as a curse.

Such then was the position of women as Homer pictures it to us. When we come to consider them individually, we cannot help being struck by their wonderful nobility and charm. Far surpassing Homer's goddesses in beauty of conception, they form, too, one of the most perfect and most pleasing types in all literature. Nausicaa,[2] the daughter of the Phaeacian king Alcinous, is the personification of grace and *naïveté*, and delights us with her natural modesty and ingenuousness. She is just approaching a marriageable age—in fact, the day for her nuptials is already

[1] Paus. ii. 21, 8
[2] Od. vi.

nigh; and in preparation for that event she wishes to have all her clothes clean and in nice condition. So she goes to her father, and asks him if she may have the mules harnessed to the chariot, and go down with her handmaidens to the washing trenches at the river's mouth to wash his clothes and the clothes of her brothers, that he may appear as befits him in the council, and that they may go well clad to the dance.

> This gen'ral cause she show'd, and would not name
> Her mind of nuptials to her sire, for shame.[1]

Her father reads her mind, and complies with her request. Nausicaa herself drives the mules, and on arrival at the river the clothes are washed in the trenches and then spread out on the beach to dry in the rays of the sun.

> Till which time, having din'd, Nausicaa
> With other virgins did at stool-ball play,
> Their shoulder-reaching head-tires laying by.
> Nausicaa, with the wrists of ivory,
> The liking stroke struck, singing first a song,
> As custom order'd, and amidst the throng
> Made such a show, and so past all was seen
> As when the chaste-born, arrow-loving Queen,
> Along the mountains gliding, either over
> Spartan Taygetus, whose tops far discover,
> Or Erymanthus, in the wild boar's chace,
> Or swift-hov'd hart, and with her Jove's fair race,
> The field Nymphs, sporting; amongst whom, to see
> How far Diana had priority,
> Though all were fair, for fairness yet of all,
> As both by head and forehead being more tall,
> Latona triumph'd, since the dullest sight
> Might eas'ly judge whom her pains brought to light;
> Nausicaa so, whom never husband tam'd,
> Above them all in all the beauties flam'd.[2]

As the game proceeds, Nausicaa sends the ball into the sea. All the maidens cry out, and thus wake

[1] Od. vi. 66–7 (Chapman's translation).
[2] *Ibid.*, 99–109.

Ulysses, who, thrown ashore from his wrecked ship, lies asleep beneath a rock. At the sound he looks forth from his place of concealment, and his rough appearance and dishevelled hair drive them to flight.

> All but Nausicaa fled; but she fast stood,
> Pallas had put a boldness in her breast,
> And in her fair limbs tender fear comprest.
> And still she stood him, as resolv'd to know
> What man he was, or out of what should grow
> His strange repair to them.[1]

Ulysses himself, "the man of many wiles" (πολυμήχανος), is at a loss how he should approach her. Fearful of offending her maiden modesty, he remains at a distance, and, whilst attempting to excite her vanity by likening her to Diana, begs only to be supplied with some covering for his nakedness and to learn the way to the city. Nausicaa, unmoved by his flattery, naively tells him who she is and promises her help; she calls back her attendants, reproaches them for their flight, and bids them procure him food and raiment and point out a spot where he may bathe protected from the wind. When Ulysses appears again before her, she marvels at the change in his appearance, and with childlike candour puts her thoughts into words:

> "Hear me, you
> Fair-wristed virgins! This rare man, I know
> Treads not our country-earth, against the will
> Of some god thronèd on th' Olympian hill.
> He show'd to me, till now, not worth the note,
> But now he looks as he had godhead got.
> I would to heav'n my husband were no worse,
> And would be call'd no better, but the course
> Of other husbands pleas'd to dwell out here.
> Observe and serve him with our utmost cheer."[2]

But she will not let him accompany them back to the

[1] Od. vi. 139–141 (Chapman's translation).
[2] *Ibid.*, 239–246.

city, lest her reputation should suffer at the hands of the populace. She gives him, moreover, careful instructions how to conduct himself so as to win the sympathy of her mother, Arete, and then leaves him to follow on behind.

Ulysses arrives at the palace, and is well received by king Alcinous, who entertains him with all honour and assures him that he will, on no distant day, tread the soil of Ithaca. The next day the stranger seems to Nausicaa like a god, and the desire to live in his memory prompts her again to address him:

> "God save you, guest!
> Be cheerful, as in all the future state
> Your home will show you in your better fate.
> But yet, ev'n then, let this remembered be,
> Your life's price I lent, and you owe it me."[1]

And so one of the most beautiful episodes in the Odyssey ends. It forms a picture of a young girl which has never been surpassed in charm—an ideal portrayal of maiden modesty and natural grace.

But it is in his pictures of married life that the women of Homer appear to the greatest advantage. His views are expressed in Ulysses' words to Nausicaa, when he wishes her the greatest happiness in return for the pity and help she seems willing to show:

> "God give you, in requital, all th' amends
> Your heart can wish, a husband, family,
> And good agreement. Nought beneath the sky
> More sweet, more worthy is, than firm consent
> Of man and wife in household government."[2]

Such ideal households are shown us in the Phaeacian home of Alcinous and Arete, and in the Trojan palace of Hector and Andromache; whilst the whole of the Odyssey is concerned in showing the con-

[1] Od. viii. 461, 462 (Chapman's translation).
[2] *Ibid.*, 180–4.

stancy and love of Penelope towards Ulysses. Nausicaa's mother, Arete, is in honour and importance the equal of her husband, and it is she whom the young girl advises Ulysses to approach in supplication.[1] But the veneration which she inspires does not excite her pride nor render her ambitious. She is at all times the queen of Alcinous, and only uses her influence to obtain succour for the wretched, or to settle the disputes of contentious citizens.[2] And then Andromache! What passage in literature can surpass in beauty and pathos the scene which depicts Hector taking leave of his wife and child on his way to the field of battle.[3] The young wife is carrying in her arms her firstborn son, Astyanax; with his birth she feels that her wedded life has only just begun; her father and her brothers are dead, slain by the hand of Achilles. Hector and Astyanax are all she has left to love, and she loves them with passionate force. Hector is to her a father, mother, brothers, and husband as well. If he is killed, Astyanax will have none to protect him, and she herself will be carried away captive and enslaved. Hector reaches out his arms for his son, but the boy shrinks back, frightened by the glittering brass and nodding plumes of his helmet, and through her tears Andromache smiles. Throughout the whole scene we see, expressed in words, the complete dependence of the wife and mother, but we also recognize that we have before us a pair of young lovers, and we feel that if Andromache were to put reserve aside and utter all her thoughts, she would add: "Save thyself too, because I love thee." Then again, in the twenty-second book of the Iliad,[4] when Hector has already

[1] Od. vi. 310–11.
[2] Od. vii. 66–77.
[3] Il. vi. 394 *seq.*
[4] Il. xxii. 437 *seq.*

fallen by Achilles' sword, we see Andromache, ignorant as yet of his fate, seated in her chamber, endeavouring to seek some distraction from her anxiety in weaving a veil, "strew'd curiously with varied flowers"[1]; whilst her maidens are preparing a bath for Hector on his return from battle. Suddenly she hears a clamorous uproar, pierced by the cries of women. She trembles; her work drops from her hand; she feels her worst fears are realized; and, rushing to the summit of the tower, gazes anxiously at the plain. There she sees Hector being dragged by the horses of Achilles towards the Greek ships. She falls back in a faint, and when she recovers, pours out her sorrow in words of the profoundest despair. Such is Andromache, the loving young wife of Hector, the solicitous mother of Astyanax—as both, ideal.

In Penelope we have a wife presented to us under another aspect, the wife who, in her husband's absence, remains ever true to him, and believes, in spite of all, that he will return to her at last. When the Odyssey opens, it is over nineteen years since Ulysses set out from Ithaca to join the other Greeks against Troy. The city has long been a mass of ruins; all the other Greek heroes who have escaped the dangers of war and tempest have returned to their homes. Ulysses alone has not returned to his fatherland, and his fate alone is unknown. In Ithaca a band of wealthy and noble princes pay their court to Ulysses' wife, Penelope,[2] and they press her to choose one of them to take the place of her absent, and now probably dead, husband. But she will pay no heed, and persists in consuming with tears her beauty and her youth. The days and months glide

[1] Il. xxii. 441. [2] Od. i. 245.

on. The constancy of Penelope serves only to inflame the desires of the suitors. They establish themselves in the palace, and waste Ulysses' substance with sumptuous feasts, and maltreat his servants. Penelope then has recourse to a ruse. She commences on her loom a work of immense size,[1] to serve, she says, as old Laertes' funeral shroud, and promises to make her choice when it is finished. But each night she undoes the work of the day, and so for three years eludes their pursuit; but at last her maids betray her.[2] Then she learns that Telemachus, her son, now grown to man's estate, has set out for Pylos to search for his father. This is a new anxiety; she fears that he too will not return.[3] In due course, however, Telemachus comes back[4] with the news that his father is still alive;[5] but thereupon the suitors enter upon a systematic persecution of Telemachus.[6] At last she proposes that the suitors shall be judged by means of Ulysses' mighty bow:

> "He that can draw it with least show to strive,
> And through these twelve axe-heads an arrow drive,
> Him will I follow."[7]

The trial begins, and Penelope goes up to her chamber where she weeps till sleep comes upon her. But Ulysses has indeed returned, and is at that moment seated as a humble guest in the banqueting-hall. He asks if he too may try to draw the bow, and with scornful jests and mocking laughter the suitors grant his request. He takes it and tests it, then fits an arrow to the string and, stretching the bow to its farthest compass, drives the bolt through the mark. Then follows the slaying of the suitors; and Penelope

[1] Od. ii. 95. [2] Od. ii. 108. [3] Od. iv. 675 *seq.*
[4] Od. xvi. 337. [5] Od. xvii. 142. [6] Od. xvi. 411.
[7] Od. xxi. 75–7 (Chapman's translation).

is aroused from her sleep to bid welcome to the husband whose return she had awaited so long. But even now she will not trust herself to the evidence of the bow; she demands some more certain proof, an indication that this man, so changed in many ways from the Ulysses of old, knew something that Ulysses alone could know. And so she tells her attendants to bring forth from the bridal-chamber the bed that stood therein, and fix it in a cooler place.[1] This bed had been fashioned and set up by Ulysses himself, and well she knew that, if this man were Ulysses, he would be aware that the bed was firmly fixed in the ground and not to be moved with ease. He is aware and she no longer hesitates, but runs and throws her arms about his neck, kissing his head and excusing her tardy recognition.[2] Penelope remains for us as the ideal of constancy and chastity, in the face of the strongest temptations and the almost certain death of her husband. And yet she relies on no superhuman powers of resistance; throughout the poem she shows the instincts, the superstitions, and above all the heart of a woman. Superior indeed, but still a woman. Her constancy brings upon her at times the reproaches of her son; but, though loyalty to Ulysses is her first duty, she loves Telemachus with true motherly tenderness, and the sorrow she feels at his departure for Pylos is only equalled by her joy at his safe return.[3]

In a position of peculiar and quite exceptional splendour stands the Homeric Helen. In none of his creations does Homer's genius show itself in a more remarkable manner. When we pause at the end of the poem and attempt to form some estimate of Helen's character, we feel at once horror and compassion, hatred and sympathy. We seem to see two

[1] Od. xxiii. 177 *seq.* [2] Od. xxiii. 205. [3] Od. xvii. 41.

distinct personages—the faithless wife, and the unhappy victim of circumstances. The indignation we feel when we think of ruined Troy and dethroned Priam is mingled with, and softened by, an indulgent pity for one so beautiful and so sorely tempted. Helen, in spite of the enormity of her transgression, does not appear as an utterly corrupt and degraded woman. Her fall was a surprise of the senses, an act of imprudence and indiscretion rather than a deliberate act of wickedness arising from a depraved mind. She is a blameless victim of the power of Aphrodite, and her love for Paris is a fate sent by the goddess. She is overcome with remorse, and reproaches herself in the most bitter terms; but so little is she naturally inclined to evil that the past appears to her as an unpleasant dream.[1] And so we cannot but feel with the Greeks that it was right and fitting that, after the fall of Troy and her return to Sparta, she should resume her former position as the wife of Menelaus, and command again the honour and respect of her countrymen. "Most of Homer's characters, and especially his female characters, are types drawn from nature. We have the wife, the mother, the maiden of all ages and of every class, but they all bear the general characteristics of the type they represent. It is not so with Helen. She is not the mother, the wife, the young girl; she is not even the faithless wife; she is a type in herself—she is Helen."[2] She is too, above all, the Helen of Homer. Euripides, Seneca, Shakespeare, and Goethe —all have represented her in their plays, but in all of them she is a transformed and, it must be said, a less pleasing personality.

[1] Il. iii. 180.
[2] Camboulin, F. R., *Les Femmes d'Homère* (1854), p. 62 *seq.*

Nausicaa, Arete, Andromache, Penelope, Helen—these are the great female characters in the Iliad and Odyssey; they are the most queenly figures in the Homeric Portrait Gallery; but with them we may name some of the lesser ones—Hecuba, Priam's wife; Cassandra, his prophetic daughter; Anticlea, the shadowy form of the mother of Ulysses, magnificent in her sadness; the venerable Euryclea, the prototype of a faithful handmaiden. All have their individual charm, and help to furnish a catalogue of womanhood which has hardly been equalled and never surpassed.

The heroic age of Homer was followed by the great period of colonization. In this period we begin to see the effect of that spirit of expansion which was, in later times, to become transformed into Imperialism. Restlessness and movement are characteristic of the times, and the home loses its former attractions. A natural consequence of this is a change in the position and treatment of women. We find them excluded from the interests which engage the attentions of the Greek men, and, especially, from the public games (ἀγῶνες) which now begin to gain so much importance. Marriage loses its intimate character, the wife now bringing a dowry, and becomes more and more a political institution. The poets criticize women unfavourably, and adopt a tone of increasing bitterness. So, too, from the folk-lore and stories of colonization, some of which were, at a later date, put into the form of novels by such writers as Parthenias, all tender womanliness is excluded. But it is an age of transition, and to us its main interest lies in the cases where the Homeric type of woman has not entirely disappeared, but only changed her characteristics. Such cases are found chiefly among the Aeolian

Greeks. Here woman refused to be intellectually eclipsed, and there arose a band of poetesses who rivalled in fame their contemporaries of the opposite sex. First and foremost amongst these must be named the Lesbian Sappho,[1] whom Plato dignifies with the epithet of "the tenth Muse." No ancient critic can find a defect in her poems or her style[2]; and, if the scanty remains which we possess may be taken as a criterion of her whole work, Sappho stands unrivalled, in her particular sphere, as the poet of Love and the Graces. Little is known of her history, but it has been well established that she was a native of Mytilene —or possibly of the small neighbouring town Eresus —and that she flourished in the first half of the sixth century B.C. She appears to have established in Mytilene a literary association of women of tastes and pursuits similar to her own, and it is said that they devoted themselves to every species of refined and elegant pleasure, sensual or intellectual. Music and poetry, and the art of love, were taught by the poetess and her elder companions to the younger members of the sisterhood. The only complete poem of Sappho's which has been preserved to us describes, in the most impassioned strains, the tortures she is suffering from an unrequited love, and she implores the aid of Aphrodite to soothe her pangs by softening the heart of the cruel object of her affections.

Venus, bright goddess of the skies,
To whom unnumber'd temples rise,
Jove's daughter fair, whose wily arts
Delude fond lovers of their hearts;
O! listen gracious to my prayer,
And free my mind from anxious care.

[1] Köchleg, *Über Sappho mit Rücksicht auf die gesellschaftliche Stellung der Frauen bei den Griechen.* Akad. Vorträge (1859).

[2] We may recall the story of Solon who, upon hearing his nephew recite one of Sappho's poems, prayed that he might not die until he had learnt it by heart (Stobaeus, *Serm.* xxix. 28).

Alinari

SAPPHO

FROM THE SCULPTURE IN THE VATICAN

If e'er you heard my ardent vow,
Propitious goddess, hear me now!
And oft my ardent vow you've heard,
By Cupid's friendly aid preferr'd,
Oft left the golden courts of Jove,
To listen to my tales of love.

The radiant car your sparrows drew;
You gave the word and swift they flew,
Through liquid air they wing'd their way,
I saw their quivering pinions play;
To my plain roof they bore their queen,
Of aspect mild, and look serene.

Soon as you came, by your command,
Back flew the wanton feather'd band,
Then, with a sweet enchanting look,
Divinely smiling, thus you spoke:
"Why didst thou call me to thy cell?
Tell me, my gentle Sappho, tell.

"What healing medicine shall I find
To cure thy love-distemper'd mind?
Say, shall I lend thee all my charms,
To win young Phaon to thy arms?
Or does some other swain subdue
Thy heart? My Sappho, tell me who?

"Though now, averse, thy charms he slight,
He soon shall view thee with delight;
Though now he scorns thy gifts to take,
He soon to thee shall offerings make;
Though now thy beauties fail to move,
He soon shall melt with equal love."

Once more, O Venus, hear my prayer,
And ease my mind of anxious care;
Again vouchsafe to be my guest,
And calm this tempest in my breast!
To thee, bright queen, my vows aspire;
O grant me all my heart's desire![1]

This beautiful and touching poem, though much of the charm of the original is necessarily lost in a translation, is supposed, according to the popular tradition, to have been addressed to a young Mytilenean named Phaon, and it is further told that Sappho, failing to gain his love in return, threw herself into the sea from the summit of the Leucadian promontory. Like most of these stories of early times, doubts have been expressed of the existence of such a person as Phaon, and also of Sappho's fatal plunge. Such questions

[1] Translated by Fawkes, *The Works of the English Poets*, vol. xx., 1810.

are, however, of little importance except to the antiquary; and, even if they could be solved beyond all doubt, Sappho's personality would undergo no change in our minds.

There is, however, a further delicate question which no writer on Sappho can ignore. This is her relations with the women who formed the literary coterie of which she was the head. There can be no doubt that the Aeolian women enjoyed a far greater amount of liberty than the Ionian women of the same time. It was not thought improper for them to pay visits to one another, and there can be no reason for doubting that the primary objects of the literary associations which were formed were the study and the practice of the arts of poetry and music. Two rivals of Sappho are mentioned by name, Gorgo and Andromeda.[1] But it has also been asserted—with absolute distinctness by the comic poets of Athens—that their members were wont to indulge in every form of sensual pleasure. Culture and disregard of morality may have existed side by side in Lesbos, as they have elsewhere. Sappho herself in her poems addresses young girls in strains of the most passionate nature. The most striking verses in this respect are those which have been preserved to us by Longinus, in which, addressing a young girl, she says: "That man seems to me equal to the gods, who sits opposite to thee, and watches thy sweet speech and charming smile. My heart loses its force; for when I look at thee, my tongue ceases to utter; my voice is broken, a subtle fire glides through my veins, my eyes grow dim, and a rushing sound fills my ears." To this we must add the universal character given to her by the Athenian comic poets. Yet allowance

[1] Maxim. Tyr., *Dissert.*, xxiv.

must be made for the licence permitted to these writers; and we have the evidence of her contemporary Alcaeus, who addresses her as "Violet crowned, pure, sweetly-smiling Sappho";[1] and her bitter reproaches to her brother Charaxus, who allowed his passion for a courtesan to go to such extremes that he bought her for a large sum in Egypt and then set her free.[2] Both views have received strong adherents, and Sappho has been condemned as a voluptuary with the gift of song, and revered as a pure and inspired being, whose warm-blooded southern nature lacked merely the restraint and discretion which characterize the inhabitants of our more northern clime. It is possible, however, that the truth may lie somewhere between these extremes. Sappho, in any case, can never lose her charm. For perfection of style and beauty of expression she will ever stand unrivalled and unequalled in the domain of lyrical song.

Of her immediate pupils, two only are mentioned as worthy of poetic fame. One of these is Danophila, the Pamphylian, who wrote a hymn on the worship of the Pergean Artemis.[3] The other is Erinna, who is said to have died in early youth while chained by her mother to the spinning wheel. She wrote only one poem, which she called "The Spindle" (Ἠλακάτη); it contained three hundred hexameters, and was said by the ancients to show a genius equal to that of Homer.[4]

On the other side of the Aegean, in Boeotia, we find at a somewhat later date two other poetesses, Corinna and Myrtis, both of whom were rivals of the youthful Pindar. Corinna is said to have gained the victory over him on five occasions,[5] and to have

[1] Ἴοπλοχ', ἁγνὰ, μελιχόμειδε Σαπφοῖ (fragm. 38. Blomf.).
[2] Herod. ii. 135; Athen. xiii. 596.
[3] Philostrat., *Vit. Apollon.* i. 30, p. 37, ed. Olear.
[4] *Anthol. Palat.*, ix. 190. [5] Aelian, *Varia Historia*, xiii. 24.

assisted him with advice. She recommended him to ornament his poems with mythological narrations, but when he had composed a hymn, in the first six verses of which almost the whole of Theban mythology was introduced, she smiled and said, "We should sow with the hand, not with the whole sack." Of her poetry too little is left for us to form an adequate judgment; the extant fragments deal, in the main, with mythological subjects, especially the heroines of the Boeotian legends, and the stories of her rivalry with Pindar show that she must have written choral lyrics.

But whilst upon the Aeolian Greeks the spirit of the age had pressed but lightly, a conspicuous difference may be seen among the Ionians and the Dorians. Both had taken leading parts in the great colonizing movement, and were destined, in the persons of Athens and Sparta respectively, to embark upon a vigorous policy of Imperialism. The dangers which threatened Greece from the power of Persia in the beginning of the fifth century B.C. made it imperative for the various city-states to adopt some general means of resistance. This took the form of the confederacy of Delos, which, in its inception, was a league of equal and independent states, and the fundamental idea necessitated the provision by each member of a certain quota of ships which should go to form the confederate fleet. Some of the smaller states, however, were too poor even to equip one ship, and it was therefore arranged that they should be permitted to contribute a sum of money (*φόρος*), the assessment being entrusted to the Athenian Aristides, whose character for honesty and fairness had earned him the title of "the just." Before long even the larger states preferred to adopt the system of money pay-

ments rather than furnish ships for the League; and some fifteen years after the formation of the confederacy there remained, besides Athens, only three states on the original basis—the large and wealthy islands of Lesbos, Chios, and Samos. From the first Athens had succeeded in gaining a powerful ascendancy. The genius of Themistocles had rendered her the greatest sea-power in the Aegean; and, largely for this reason, to her was entrusted the sole duty of collecting the contributions due from the different states. To Athens also must be attributed the initiation of the policy of reducing seceding members by force, and her vigorous prosecution of this policy rendered them, in fact, little better than subjects of Athens. Having thus tasted the sweets of suzerainty, it needed little to induce her to enter the path of Imperialism proper. With this object the treasury of the League was, in 454 B.C., transferred from Delos to Athens, under the pretext that, as the contributions were collected by Athenian officials and the majority of the ships built and manned by Athenian men, such an arrangement would be a saving of time and trouble.

Such, briefly, was the history of the foundation of the Athenian empire, which lasted for half a century —a period which at the same time marks the zenith of Athenian culture. What, then, was the position of women in Athens[1] at this period? We shall find that it differs very considerably from that of the Homeric woman. The Athenian girl was, till seven years old, brought up at home with her brothers under her mother's supervision. This was, in fact, the period of her greatest freedom and closest intercourse with

[1] See especially Lallier, R., *De la condition de la femme dans la famille athénienne au ve et au ive siècle* (1875); Jacobs, Friedrich, *Verm. Schrift.* (1830), iv., pp. 247 *seq.*

others. After attaining to that age she was kept in the closest confinement; in the house itself, she had to remain in the women's quarters (*γυναικωνῖτις*). She was only permitted to leave the house on rare occasions,[1] and then only to be a spectator at, or participator in, a religious procession. On such occasions she used to carry the sacred basket (*ἀρρηφορία*), or, in the great festival of the Panathenaea, convey the veil which she had embroidered to be dedicated in the temple of Athene on the Acropolis. Or again, she might be chosen to take part in one of the choral dances which played so important a part in the religious rites of Greece. Her education consisted in learning to read and write, and music also formed part of the usual curriculum. But for all this she was entirely dependent upon her mother, and it is probable that very few women possessed any literary culture. Silence at all times, whether in or out of the house, was considered the duty of a woman; and not only was she expected to keep silence herself, but she was also expected to conduct herself in such a way that no one else should speak about her.[2]

As in Homeric times, all women were expected to marry, and their disposal was wholly at the option of their nearest male relative, even a husband having the right to say who should succeed him on his death. Marriage had become, in fact, purely a political institution. The close intimacy between husband and wife which is associated with the modern married life was wholly foreign to Athenian ideas. The wife was expected to live at home and keep house; she con-

[1] *Menandri Reliqq.*, p. 87, ed. Meineke: *πέρας γὰρ αὔλιοι θύρα ἐλευθέρᾳ γυναικὶ νενόμιστ' οἰκίας.*

[2] Thuc., ii. 45, *εἰ δέ με δεῖ καὶ γυναικείας τι ἀρετῆς, ὅσαι νῦν ἐν χηρείᾳ ἔσονται, μνησθῆναι, βραχείᾳ παραινέσει ἅπαν σημανῶ· τῆς τε γὰρ, ὑπαρχούσης φύσεως μὴ χείροσι γένεσθαι ὑμῖν μεγάλη ἡ δόξα καὶ ἧς ἂν ἐπ' ἐλάχιστον ἀρετῆς πέρι ἢ ψόγου ἐν τοῖς ἄρσεσι κλέος ᾖ.*

trolled a large establishment of slaves, and had the custody of all the household stores. But her principal duty consisted in being the mother of citizens, for no one could possess the rights of citizenship unless he were born of an Athenian father and an Athenian mother. There must, it is true, have been some notable exceptions, and at times the wife must have shared in the interests of her husband's life and have been to him a true helpmate. Such a picture is preserved to us in the *Oeconomicus* of Xenophon.[1] Socrates and Critobulus are discussing agriculture and the management of a household, and in the course of the dialogue Socrates relates a discussion he had formerly had with Ischomachus on the same subject. Ischomachus attributes his happiness and high reputation to the excellence of his wife, and proceeds to tell how he educated her. His young wife was not quite fifteen at the time of her marriage, and "had been most carefully brought up to see and hear as little as possible, and to ask the fewest questions."[2] Ischomachus, therefore, takes upon himself the part of instructor. The young couple are for the first time alone in each other's presence; it had been the usual marriage of convenience, arranged by the parents. The wife is timid and terrified at her own ignorance: "her whole experience consisted in knowing how to take the wool and make a dress, and in seeing how her mother's handmaidens had their daily spinning-tasks assigned to them."[3] So Ischomachus has to proceed with care and tenderness; first, he offered a sacrifice to the gods, and "prayed that he might teach and she might learn all that could conduce to

[1] Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, vii–x. The passages quoted in the text are taken from *The Works of Xenophon*, translated by H. G. Dakyns (1890, etc.).

[2] *Ibid.*, vii. 5. [3] *Ibid.*, vii. 6.

the happiness of both."[1] Then, without hurry, when he had given her time "to become accustomed to his hand and to take part in a discussion,"[2] Ischomachus sets himself to win her confidence. She is to consider herself the partner of her husband, not his slave, and to have her share of authority. Their functions are different, but complementary; to the man belong the outdoor occupations, to the woman the care of the house and the wise employment of what the husband has procured. He compares the wife to the queen-bee, which "stays in the hive and suffers not the other bees to be idle."[3] So, too, the wife must set the slaves to their work, and further, she must tend them when they are sick and nurse them back to health. This last duty Ischomachus had expected she would not find pleasing, but "Nay," she answered, "that will be my pleasantest of tasks, if careful nursing may touch the springs of gratitude and leave them friendlier than heretofore."[4] And so he continues the enumeration of her duties. His wife cannot at first believe that she has so considerable a part to play; and then follows a charming passage, in which each belittles, with the object of exalting the other's worth, the services which they can individually render to the community. As Ischomachus proceeds, his wife's timidity vanishes, she sees before her a larger and more useful life than she had at first imagined possible, and she rejoices in it.

But Ischomachus is not content with these maxims merely; he knows that, even with the best and most apt pupils, their practical application is needed. And so he asks his wife one day for something and she

[1] Xenophon, vii. 7.

[2] *Ibid.*, vii. 8. ἐπεὶ ἤδη μοι χειροήθης ἦν καὶ ἐτετιθάσσευτο ὥστε διαλέγεσθαι.

[3] *Ibid.*, vii. 33.

[4] *Ibid.*, vii. 37.

cannot find it; she is much annoyed with herself at being unable to find it and blushes deeply. He immediately consoles her, but does not lose the opportunity of speaking about the advantages of order, pointing his remarks with illustrations of a choral dance, an army, and a ship. And, still further to help his wife, he goes round all the rooms with her, and they consult together how everything shall be disposed and arranged. With all this finished, he then tells his wife that she must appoint a housekeeper; on the character and position of this servant he is very particular. Not only is she to be painstaking and honest, but she must also have a good memory, and, above all, she must be a woman who can enter into the family life and take more than a mercenary interest in the welfare of her master and mistress. All the other servants, too, are to be under the control of the wife; "like a queen, she must bestow, according to the power vested in her, praise and honour on the well-deserving, but blame and chastisement on him who stood in need thereof."[1]

No less marked than the victory over his wife's timidity is the triumph of Ischomachus over another tendency. One day she had decked herself out in shoes with high heels to appear tall, and painted her cheeks to appear beautiful. Ischomachus gently reproaches her for this innocent *coquetterie*, and points out a far surer aid to beauty, "Not to be for ever seated like a slave; but, with the help of the gods, to assume the attitude of a true mistress standing before the loom, and where her knowledge gave her the superiority, bravely to give the aid of her instruction; where her knowledge failed, as bravely try to learn . . . to oversee the baking woman as she made

[1] Xenophon ix. 15.

the bread; to stand beside the housekeeper as she measured out the stores; to make tours of inspection to see if all things were in order as they should be. For, as it seemed to me, this would at once be walking exercise and supervision. And, as an excellent gymnastic, I recommended her to knead the dough and roll the paste; to shake the coverlets and make the beds; adding, if she trained herself in exercise of this sort, she would enjoy her food, grow vigorous in health, and her complexion would in very truth be lovelier."[1]

The conversations between Ischomachus and his wife are, of course, fictitious. The author does not intend to place before us the customs of the times, but an ideal image of family life. And yet Xenophon was not a man of a lively imagination; even when he invents, he never detaches himself completely from reality; and we shall probably not go far wrong if we regard this part of the treatise as founded largely upon the experience of his own married life. He was superior in many ways to his contemporaries, but he was still an Athenian; and his life must have followed, in the main, the ordinary course. We can see, at least, what was expected of an Athenian wife; it is clear that her domain lay in the house entirely, and that her education depended largely upon the husband. It was possible for her, with his help, to be more than a housekeeper and the mother of his children; she might even, as Ischomachus himself says, make her husband her most willing servant. "The greatest joy of all will be to prove yourself my better; to make me your faithful follower; knowing no dread lest as the years advance you should decline in honour in your household, but rather trust-

[1] Xenophon, x. 10, 11.

Anderson

ASPASIA

FROM THE BUST IN THE VATICAN

ing that, though your hair turn grey, yet, in proportion as you come to be a better helpmate to myself and to the children, a better guardian of our home, so will your honour increase throughout the household as mistress, wife, and mother, daily more dearly prized."[1]

That there were instances in which women stood to men in a relation analogous to the modern wife is very probable. Such an instance, indeed, we find in the case of Aspasia and Pericles. Born in Miletus, a city famous as one of the strongholds of Ionic culture, Aspasia[2] studied philosophy under Thargelia, and, attracted by the growing fame of Athens, came to the city and set up a school of philosophy herself. Her house was frequented by the most brilliant and intellectual of the Athenians, Socrates himself being a constant attendant; and it was here that she attracted the attention and love of the great statesman Pericles. So strong did his attachment become that he divorced his wife; and, though the foreign birth of Aspasia precluded him, in accordance with Athenian law, from actually marrying her, there can be no doubt that she became his wife in all but the name. Her influence over him appears to have been very great; it is said that she instructed him in the art of rhetoric, and that she even composed some of his speeches for him, among them his famous funeral oration over those citizens who had fallen before the walls of Potidaea, which has been preserved for us by Thucydides. It is also said that she played a leading part in the politics of Athens. She is spoken of as

[1] Xenophon, vii. 42.

[2] Mähly, A., *De Aspasia Milesia*, in Philologus, viii. p. 213 *seq.*; Capefigue, *Aspasie et le siècle de Pericles* (1862); Fouquières, Becq. de, *Aspasie de Milet* (1872); and the article "Aspasie" in *La grande Encyclopédie*.

the cause of the Samian and even of the Peloponnesian wars, and against her were directed the attacks of the opponents of Pericles towards the end of his life. She was charged with impiety by the comic poet Hermippus, who represented her abode as a house of recreation in the worst sense; but the pleading of Pericles procured her acquittal. The character of Aspasia has been the subject of almost as much controversy as that of Sappho. By the comic poets of the period she is treated as the mistress of Pericles, and as such she is spoken of in the vilest terms. We must remember, however, that the custom of the times allowed unlimited licence, and that Aristophanes in particular was a member of the moderate party (*οἱ μέσοι*) in Athens, and therefore strongly opposed to the policy of Pericles. Too much value must not be placed upon this estimate of her; and in opposition to this we know that Socrates spoke of her as his pupil, and that married men used to take their wives to her house. But a far stronger proof, in our opinion, of Aspasia's virtue is to be found in the very fact that Pericles was so attracted by her. It is difficult to believe that one of the greatest statesmen the world has ever seen, a man too of the highest intelligence and culture, could have entered into such intimate relations with, and allowed himself to be so influenced by, a woman of depraved tastes and doubtful morality. No; whatever may have been Aspasia's life before she came to Athens or after the death of Pericles, it is our strong conviction that, between those two events at least, her character stood high, and that she must be regarded as a woman who deserves the greatest respect and honour. Her beauty and wisdom captivated the greatest statesman Athens ever produced; she was raised to a position which

no other Athenian woman ever held, and so long as she held that position she conducted herself with a prudence and intelligence which characterize the finest and most cultivated natures.

Before leaving the Athenian women, a few words must be said of the character given to them by the great tragic poets. Aeschylus deals almost entirely with mythological characters; we can obtain, therefore, little information as to his views of the position and character of women. He appears, however, to have considered the treatment accorded to them in Athens in his time as right and fitting, and to have been in sympathy with the public opinion which approved such treatment. There are no love-scenes whatever in his plays. Sophocles, again, took his subjects and also his ideas from the legends of old. His Antigone and Electra may be compared with the women of Homer; but it is probable that we cannot form a judgment of the women of the time from these characters. Women play a very important part, however, in the plays of Euripides, who was accused of lowering tragedy by introducing into it characters of more human interest. The prominent place given to them, both as characters and chorus, is in fact the new and original feature in his plays. He is generally spoken of by ancient critics as a misogynist. But this epithet is hardly deserved. It is true that there are many passages in his dramas, and more particularly in the fragments, which place women in a very unfavourable light; but when we come to examine them, we find that his attacks are always directed against a particular class of women, and not against women in general. If we may judge from the plays of Aristophanes, the women of Athens were beginning, under the prolonged and continued in-

fluence of Imperialism, to assume a character which approximated to the freedom of the Spartan women. They were showing, in fact, a strong inclination towards *féminisme* and emancipation of their sex. It is upon these women that Euripides pours out the vials of his scorn and contempt. He appears to have suffered from the results of this in his own domestic life. But he draws a distinction between the good and the bad wife, and allows that to the former must not be extended the odium which attaches to the latter. The beautiful pictures he has drawn of a devoted wife in the character of Alcestis, and of a devoted sister in the persons of Iphigeneia, Electra, and Antigone prove that his condemnation of women was only partial. Nor has any poet written in more touching strain of the love of parents for their children. Euripides cannot, therefore, be regarded as a misogynist; he shared with the generality of the Athenians the belief that the only safeguard of virtue and honesty in women lay in seclusion and retirement; his efforts were therefore directed to stem the tide of emancipation and bring about a complete return to this ideal.

Whilst, however, the effect of Imperialism upon the ordinary Athenian woman was to push her into the background and to compel her to lead a life of restricted freedom and virtual inactivity, the history of Sparta shows a very different picture. The Spartans were surrounded on every side by large and hostile states; and, at the same time, within their own boundaries, they had under them a large subject population, the Helots, who were always disaffected, and ready, on the slightest provocation, to turn upon their masters. It was therefore above all necessary for them to be in a continual state of preparation for

war, and to this end their whole constitution was solely directed. The framing of this constitution was attributed by tradition to Lycurgus; and, whatever the truth as to his personality may be, it is certain that, in historical times, they were living under a régime which had no other object than to secure the state against the attacks of enemies from within or without. The town itself was no more than a collection of villages, without a wall or fortifications of any sort; and the position of headship which Sparta maintained in the Peloponnesus for some five centuries, assuming at times the hegemony of all Greece, is a standing tribute to the genius of the statesman to whom their constitution was due. It may not have raised them to the level of culture which distinguished the other cities of Greece, but that it attained the purpose for which it was framed cannot be gainsaid.

It is only natural to assume that, in a state organized for the furtherance of so special an object, very definite functions were assigned to women, and that their position was very carefully prescribed. Such indeed was the case. The Spartans had to be a race of warriors. It was therefore necessary that the women should be fitted to give birth to men who could fight. These men must be strong, brave, and ready to sacrifice everything to the interests of the state; and, believing as they did that the children inherited the characteristics of the mother rather than those of the father, the Spartans aimed above all at ensuring the possession of these qualities in their women. And so they too were brought into the strict régime of military training, and all their education was directed to the one object of preparing them to be the mothers of a hardy offspring. No sickly girl was allowed to live, and from their earliest days the healthy ones under-

went a course of gymnastic exercises. Upon attaining girlhood they were taught to wrestle, to throw the quoit and javelin, and to box. They were present at the athletic contests in the *stadium*, to which matrons were not admitted; and there they practised these accomplishments, and ran races, sometimes among themselves, and sometimes with young men; nor was it considered immodest for them to strip naked for the purpose. A great feature was also made of dancing, both as a means of exercise and for the service of the gods. In Sparta, more than any other city in Greece, musical training was of the utmost importance.[1] Its excellence was admitted and envied on all hands; and, combined as it was with gymnastics, it played the part in education which Plato assigned to it in his ideal Republic. We have heard of the dreams of philosophers, says Plutarch, about the power of music; but in Sparta we have a whole nation caught philosophizing. Music in the Spartan state was a moral power; rhythm and harmony lay at the foundation of the whole constitution. The dances of Sparta cannot therefore be judged from the modern standpoint; for they were essential to the very existence of the city. In the dances, as in the other parts of the Spartan training, the women enjoyed a freedom which was quite unknown in any other city of Greece, mingling freely and unrestrainedly with young men.

The result of this mode of life was, of course, the total destruction of all delicacy of feeling or action, yet the women of Sparta had a high repute for chastity. Every Spartan girl was expected to marry, but the age of marriage was also carefully fixed, no Spartan girl being allowed to marry until she had reached maturity. It was recognized that the children of

[1] Rowbotham, J. F., *A History of Music* (1885–7), ii. p. 489 *seq.*

"boy and girl" parents could not be strong, nor attain to the height of physical development which the needs of the state demanded. For a long time marriage retained the form of a forcible seizure, which has always characterized it among primitive peoples. The young couple could at first only meet in secret, and many must have been the shifts to which they resorted to conceal their relationship. But when once the marriage was recognized, the wife assumed a position of high honour and respect. She was dignified with the title of *δέσποινα* ("mistress" in its best sense), and was expected to be not only a good housewife, but also a staunch patriot, and devoted above all to the interests of the Spartan state. Many stories are told illustrative of their fierce and almost masculine patriotism, which prompted them to smother all the instincts of motherhood when the honour of the city was involved; so that they appear callous and hard-hearted, and devoid of all the finer impulses of feminine nature.

Adultery, we are told, was almost unknown in Sparta, and divorce non-existent. An explanation of this, however, is to be found in the custom which permitted an elderly and effete husband, who was married to a young wife, to hand her over to some younger and more robust man, in order that she might bear strong and healthy children. This custom was generally recognized as legitimate, and its observance was even at times enforced by the state. We also find that some Spartan women had more than one husband. Similar licence for a man appears only to have occurred in the case of King Anaximandridas.

The amount of property which could be held by a Spartan man was always strictly limited; but the dowries bestowed on women were generally large.

The daughters sometimes also shared with the sons in the property left by the parents. They became, therefore, great heiresses, and by the fourth century B.C. nearly half the land in Laconia was owned by women. The acquisition of wealth appears to have had a degenerating effect upon them, and it is probable also that the unrestrained liberty allowed them tempted them to indulge in a life of luxury when once they had fulfilled their duty to the state as mothers. Aristotle speaks of their licence as a blot upon the institutions of the city from the first, and both Plato and Euripides use language of the same character. We are told that after the defeat of the Spartans by Epaminondas at Leuctra in 371 B.C., the conduct of the Spartan women showed a disgraceful and unseemly panic, which contrasted very unfavourably with the heroic qualities which had formerly distinguished them. Though they were wont to boast that none of them had ever seen an enemy's watch-fires, and after they had for centuries strengthened and encouraged the men with their bravery and fortitude, they could not retain their self-possession, but ran about in the wildest confusion, shrieking and lamenting, and completely beside themselves.

In the later Hellenistic period some of the Spartan women seem to have made an effort to return to their earlier virtues, though they received but little support from their fellow-citizens, and form rather striking exceptions to the general depravity of the age than an indication of a revived spirit of patriotism. The Spartan king Agis IV tried to carry out a policy of reformation which should raise the city to its former greatness, by purging it of the abuses which had grown up and contaminated the constitution of Lycurgus. For this task he won over his mother Agesistrata and his

grandmother Archidamia, the richest women in the country, to his views; and they, after some hesitation at first, carried their enthusiasm to even greater lengths than Agis himself, and used their best endeavours to gain the approval and support of other influential women. At first the movement met with some success. Their opponents were forced into exile, among them Leonidas II, colleague of Agis, whose daughter Chelonis was among the greatest characters in these times. She was married to Cleombrotus, a supporter of Agis, but she decided that her duty called her to leave her husband and follow her father into exile. But the tide turned. Leonidas returned and gained the mastery. Agis and Cleombrotus were thrown into prison. Chelonis was again called upon to choose between her father and her husband; she again turned to the one who most needed help. As a suppliant she appeared in rags before Leonidas and begged her husband's life. This at last was granted her, but Cleombrotus was condemned to exile, and Chelonis, in spite of her father's entreaties that she should remain with him, chose to accompany her husband in his degradation and poverty. But Agis was not spared in like manner. He was cruelly strangled in prison, and Agesistrata and Archidamia were also involved in his downfall. They had asked and were granted permission to visit him in his confinement. On arrival at the gate, Archidamia was told to enter first; and as she passed the threshold she too was strangled, and left there hanging. Then Agesistrata went in and saw the two dead bodies. She first cut down Archidamia and laid her beside the corpse of Agis; then, falling upon her son and kissing him, she said: "My son, thy too great moderation, lenity, and humanity, have ruined both thee and

us." "If you approved your son's actions," said the officer who stood by, "you shall also have his reward." She submitted without hesitation, her last words being, "May all this be for the good of Sparta!"[1]

No less famous for their heroism are the wife and mother of Cleomenes, the son and successor of Leonidas II. Cleomenes had been compelled by his father to marry Agiatis, the widow of Agis. He soon grew to love her, and used to discuss with her the views and projects of Agis, and was induced to enter himself upon the path of reform. He too was aided by his mother, Cratesiclea, who won over many leading Spartans to his views, and on the death of Leonidas even married one of them in his interests. Cleomenes' object was to effect his purpose by gaining victories abroad, and so rousing the Spartans to a sense of their former greatness. In this he was for a time completely successful, and pursued a triumphant course of foreign conquest. But he had to contend against the Achaean League, whose leader, Aratus, invoked the help of the Macedonians under Antigonus. Agiatis died in the course of the war, but Cratesiclea proved the value of her support in a signal way. For when Ptolemy Euergetes demanded that Cleomenes, who had asked his help, should send his mother and children to Egypt as hostages, she prevailed upon her son to accept the conditions, saying, "Why do you not immediately put us on board a ship and send this carcase of mine where you think it may be of most use to Sparta, before age renders it good for nothing, and sinks it into the grave?" On taking leave of him in the temple of Poseidon at Taenarus, she begged Cleomenes to restrain his tears as unworthy of Sparta,

[1] See Plutarch, *Life of Agis, passim.*

and to help her do the same. Then, with a calm and composed countenance, she walked down to the ship with her grandsons. In Egypt, too, she heard that Cleomenes was hesitating to take certain measures because he feared that Ptolemy might consider it an infringement of the alliance and wreak his vengeance on the hostages he held. She therefore immediately wrote to him to do whatever was proper, and not to mind what became of an old woman and some young children.

Cleomenes was at length forced to submit to defeat. He fled to Egypt, where he found refuge; but on the accession of a new king was, with all his followers, thrown into a dungeon. They resolved, however, to overpower the guards, escape from captivity, and rouse the populace to their aid. The last item in the programme was unsuccessful, and so they resolved to die. Panteus, the youngest and most beautiful of them all, was bidden to remain alive until all the rest were dead. He examined all the bodies to see that they were dead, and then, embracing Cleomenes, he killed himself. Orders were given by the Egyptian king that all the women connected with the Spartans should die. Among them was the young and lovely wife of Panteus; she had followed him to Egypt against her father's will, and her end was the most pathetic and touching of them all. It was she who encouraged and consoled the others. It was she who led Cratesiclea to the place of execution and called upon her to meet her end with bravery, even though her children suffered before her eyes. She then laid out the bodies of the women who were dead, and, adjusting her dress, she called to the executioner to do his office, and permitting no other person to approach her, she fell like a heroine. "Thus, in this

bloody tragedy," adds Plutarch, "wherein the women contended with the men, Lacedaemon showed that it is impossible for fortune to conquer virtue."[1]

It is true that these later Spartan women are exceptions, but for that reason they stand out with the more striking vividness, and give us a clear idea of what Spartan women in the time of Sparta's greatness must have been like. Nobly indeed they served the state, but the claims of Imperialism demanded from them the sacrifice of all that is most truly womanly. An almost exact parallel may be found in the American woman of to-day, who, with the Spartan virtues, has inherited, alas! the Spartan vices. America too has had an imperial task before it. It has undertaken, in a short space of time, to conquer and control a vast territory. This task demanded fortitude and self-sacrifice of no ordinary calibre on the part of the men, and it has produced similar qualities in the women. In order to give their men-folk all the help in their power, they were bound to become largely defeminized, and to take upon themselves the masculine qualities of independence and resoluteness of purpose. The need for all the men to work has resulted in the practice of making the women heiresses. They are also permitted unrestricted freedom, and mingle freely from their earliest days with men. For this reason their interest in men has no duration, and there is a consequent failure to appreciate to the full the sanctity of the marriage tie. None the less, they have been of immense service to the state, and there can be little doubt that, if the wives of the earlier settlers had all been French, or if such as were French had not changed their nature, the Americans would not to this day have crossed the Alleghany mountains.

[1] See his *Life of Cleomenes*.

Before leaving the Greek women, it is necessary that we should say something about the *hetaerae* (ἑταῖραι),[1] or courtesans, who played such a brilliant and important part in social life that it would be impossible for a historian of women in ancient times to omit all mention of them. In the history of Greece during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., the women of whom we hear by name belong, almost without exception, to this class. It was, however, in the Ionian cities that the *hetaerae* attracted the greatest amount of attention and rose to a high level of intelligence. In dealing with a subject which is so repugnant to modern ideas, we must remember that Greek modes of thought moved, in this respect, along a very different plane. The development of humanity in all its organs and functions was considered by the Greeks the highest aim of life. It is true that they drew distinctions between the impulses of human nature, some of which were regarded as higher than others; but even the strictest moralists never advocated, or deemed possible, the total suppression of a natural appetite. The Greek legislators, when called upon to face the problem of prostitution, attempted a solution by dividing women into two distinct classes, one of which was represented by the wife, whose duty it was above all things to remain faithful to her husband, whilst the other was composed of the *hetaerae*. Each class was held to be necessary to, and to have its particular functions in, political and social life.[2] And we must not forget that the same

[1] Athen., *Deipnosophistae*, xiii. 1–6 *seq.*; Alciphron, *Epistolae*; Lucian, *Dialogues on Courtesans*; Jacobs, Friedrich, *Verm. Schrift.* (1830), iv. pp. 311–54; Lacroix, *Les Courtisanes de la Grèce* (1872); Deschanel, *Histoires des Courtisanes de la Grèce* (1854).

[2] Dem. (Pseudo), *in Neaeram*, 122. τὰς μὲν γὰρ ἑταίρας ἡδονῆς ἕνεκ' ἔχομεν, τὰς δὲ παλλακὰς τῆς καθ' ἡμέραν θεραπείας τοῦ σώματος, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας τοῦ παιδοποιεῖσθαι γνησίων καὶ τῶν ἔνδον φύλακα πιστὴν ἔχειν.

solution of the difficulty has been accepted even in modern states. In France of to-day, the strict formalities which hedge around a young girl in all her intercourse with the opposite sex have produced a precisely similar phenomenon—the *demi-mondaine*, who is often a highly cultivated and intellectual woman, and has served as a means of inspiration for some of the best and highest aspects of French art.

So then it was in ancient Athens and Corinth. The virtuous woman was compelled to live a life of almost absolute seclusion. Society, in its modern and English sense, did not exist, and so men were led to seek the society of women of lower moral standing. A further reason, in the case of Greece, may be found in the intense love of physical beauty for its own sake which was then so prevalent. On the Greeks, beauty of form had far more influence than it has on people of the present day. It was regarded as something almost divine, and the conviction of its worth was general and clearly expressed. The Greek mother used to pray, above all, that her children might be beautiful.[1] The philosopher Aristotle stated his conviction that the outward form was a symbol of the inward life. This intense aesthetic enthusiasm is found in all forms of Greek art, and has come to be regarded as a characteristic feature of Greek culture.

Again, irregular connections with women were contrasted with that unnatural love which became such a blot upon Greek civilization. It seems probable

[1] The wife of the Spartan king, Demaratus, was said to have been very ugly as a child. Her nurse, therefore, used to take her every day into the temple of Helen at Therapne, and, placing her in front of the statue of the goddess, prayed that the deformity might be taken from the child. One day a female form appeared and, stroking the child's head, promised that she should be the most beautiful of all the Spartan women—a promise which, the historian goes on to relate, was fulfilled (Herod. vi. 61).

that this vice, of which no mention is made by Homer or Hesiod, arose under the influence of the public games, and was at first an infrequent and universally stigmatized abuse of friendly relations. But in later times it lost its ideal character and degenerated into the grossest form of sensuality.

The unfortunate prevalence of this vice, which was always considered degrading, if not looked upon with universal abhorrence, raised the courtesans, even in the minds of the most illustrious moralists, above the lowest abyss of depravity; but we must not suppose from this that they were all held in honour or regarded without contempt. They were divided into many classes, and it was only the highest of these, the free-born *hetaerae*, who played any important part in the social life of Greece. These women rose into prominence more and more as the position of virtuous women fell. They were not oppressed or degraded by excommunication from society, but were generally renowned for their high intelligence and brilliant conversations. They used to gather round them the most eminent statesmen and philosophers, and their *salons* might have rivalled in magnificence and culture the circle which paid court to a Ninon de l'Enclos. In such cities as Athens and Corinth they alone of all women had unrestricted freedom, and of this they availed themselves to the full for the acquisition of a degree of knowledge which, combined with their physical beauty, rendered them extraordinarily fascinating even to the highest intellects. Many of them had statues raised in their honour,[1] and it cannot be

[1] Cf. Köhler, *Geschichte der Ehre der Bildsäule bei den Griechen*, p. 100 *seq.* We may mention the names of Cottina (Athen. xiii. 574, C.), Phryne, Glycera, Pythionice, Neaera, Lais (Tatian, *adv. Graec.* c. 55), Clino (Polyb. xvi. 11. 2), and Blistiche (Aphrodite-Blistiche, Athen. xiii. 576, F.).

doubted that they inspired some of the masterpieces of the most famous sculptors and painters of Greece. The Athenian philosophers sought their society, and *hetaerae* were among the most ardent of their disciples.

The first individual celebrity whose name has come down to us was Rhodopis,[1] a Thracian, who is said to have been a fellow-slave of the fable writer Aesop (c. 580 B.C.); she was taken to Egypt and there bought by Charaxus, the brother of Sappho, who set her free. She appears to have become very rich, and her name was known in all Greece. The building of the pyramid of Mycerinus was even attributed to her; and the story goes that, wishing to leave behind her a *souvenir* for all the Greeks, she expended one-tenth of her wealth in having a number of iron spits made, large enough to roast a whole ox, and sent them to Delphi, where they were still to be seen in the time of Herodotus, behind the altar of the Chians. Another *hetaera*, who followed Rhodopis, was Archidice;[2] she too was the subject of songs (ἀοίδιμος), but not so universally known to fame (ἧσσον περιλεσχήνευτος). But perhaps the best known of this class in early times was Leaena, the beloved of Harmodius. Her fame rests upon the part she played in the conspiracy of Harmodius and Aristogiton against the tyrants Hippias and Hipparchus. She was arrested after the death of Hipparchus, and put to the torture in order that she might give information against her lover. Rather than do this, however, she bit off her own tongue, and the later Athenians caused the statue of a tongueless lioness (λέαινα) to be made and erected to her honour in the market-place.[3]

[1] Herod. ii. 134 *seq.* [2] Herod. ii. 135.
[3] Plut., *De Garrulitate*; Plin., *Hist. Nat.* xxxiv. 19.

It was, however, in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. that these women attained their greatest influence and fame. We hear of some enjoying royal honours; Thargelia of Miletus was married to a Thessalian king; Pythionice and Glycera were treated as princesses at the court of Harpalus; and Myrrhina was the queen of Demetrius Poliorcetes in all but the name. Thais followed Alexander the Great into Asia, and suggested to him the burning of Persepolis.[1] After Alexander's death she married Ptolemy Lagi,[2] and her daughter from this marriage, Irene, became the wife of Eunostus, king of Soli, in Cyprus.

Of the cities of Greece proper, it appears that Corinth was notorious for the number of *hetaerae*, whilst the most famous of them lived at Athens. Their relations with statesmen, orators, philosophers, and poets have given them a certain historic importance, and we find that for this reason several scholars of ancient times were induced to collect information about them and to write their history.[3] The *hetaera* who attained the greatest fame, both for her beauty and her intelligence, was perhaps the Athenian Phryne. She was a native of Thespiae, born of humble parents, and as a girl she earned a precarious living by gathering capers. Having come to Athens, she soon attracted the attention of the sculptor Praxiteles, who made a statue of her, which was placed in a temple at Thespiae beside a statue of Aphrodite, also of his workmanship.[4] It is said that she once asked Praxiteles to make her a present of his finest piece of work, and

[1] Plut., *Alex.*, c. 38; Diodor. Sic. xvii. 72.

[2] Clitarchus ap. Athen. xiii. 576. E.

[3] Athen. xiii. 581, D. and E., where we find the names of Aristophanes of Byzantium, Apollodorus, Callistratus, Ammonius, the younger Antiphanes, and the Athenian Gorgias.

[4] Paus., ix. 27. 5.

when he appeared unwilling to name it, she induced him to do so by a ruse. Calling one of her slaves, she gave him a message and sent him out of the room. A few moments later the slave burst into the room with the news that Praxiteles' house was on fire, and that nearly all his statues had been destroyed. The sculptor immediately inquired whether his "Cupid" and "Satyr" were safe. Thereupon Phryne told him of her trick, and asked for, and received, the "Cupid"; she sent it to her native city of Thespiae.[1]

She was also beloved by the orator Hyperides, who defended her when brought before the tribunal of the *Heliasts* on a charge of impiety. She was accused by Euthias of ruining and corrupting the Greeks, and of having profaned the Eleusinian mysteries by parodying them; the punishment suggested was death. All her entreaties and Hyperides' eloquence were in vain; the judges were about to pronounce sentence of death; thereupon Hyperides, with a sudden gesture, tore open the garment of his client, and revealed to their astonished gaze her wonderful bosom. The judges, believing they saw before them[2] the goddess Aphrodite, immediately acquitted her. Another story bears witness not only to her great beauty, but also to the extraordinary influence which beauty of form exercised upon the Greek mind. One day at the Eleusinian festival she was seen to advance to the beach, unfastening her bright hair and girdle; and, throwing off everything, to descend slowly into the water. The Greeks were struck with amazement, and compared the scene with the well-known legend of Aphrodite rising from the waves. The occurrence is said to

[1] Paus., i. 20.1.; Athen. xiii. 591 B.

[2] Alciphron, *Epist.* i. 31 (ed. Wagner, 1788); Quint., *Instit.* ii. 15; Sextus Empiricus, *adv. Mathem.* ii. 4. p. 258. Fabric.; Plutarch, *Hyp.* 849.; Athen. xiii. 590.

THE VENUS OF PRAXITELES
AT THE VATICAN

have inspired Apelles and Praxiteles, both of whom immortalized the scene, the one in his picture of Venus Anadyomene, the other in his statue of the Cnidian Venus.[1]

With Corinth is associated the name of Lais, who was known throughout all Greece. The details of her history are, however, extremely obscure, and it is said that there were two *hetaerae* of this name. One of them was beloved by the philosopher Aristippus, and also by the cynic Diogenes; she is also said to have endeavoured to win the affections of Xenocrates, but without success. It was a Lais who attracted the attentions of the orator Demosthenes.

The Athenian philosophers did not consider it degrading, or even immoral, to enter into intimate relations with *hetaerae;* and we find that these women were frequently present at their lectures. Thus Nicarete was a pupil of Stilpo, Lasthenia of Plato, and Thais of Alciphron. Socrates himself owned that he derived all that he knew about love from his conversations with Diotima; and he praised her wisdom and intelligence in other things besides.

We see then that the *hetaerae* played a very remarkable rôle in the social life of Greece; they were in reality the only women who could be called free, and it cannot be denied that in many cases they utilized their freedom to raise themselves to a very high standard of culture and intelligence, and that they employed the additional charm which they thus acquired in a manner which ought not to be imputed to them for evil.

We have thus been able to distinguish six types of womanhood in the history of ancient Greece; commencing with the earliest, and at the same time the

[1] Athen. xiii. 590 F.

highest, type in the women of Homer, we find that they gradually degenerated, until the leading part in social life was taken by the *hetaerae*. And yet they never sank into utter depravity. Even among the *hetaerae* we find a culture and high-mindedness which can never be dissociated from our thoughts of Greece; so that even when we cannot sympathize, we still admire. In every type the Greek spirit manifests itself in a different form, but beauty remains in all. And so, if we wish to unify the different types and to sum up their leading characteristics in a single form, we cannot do better than go back to Homer, whose genius has already done it for us. For just as the Iliad represents the striving of the Greek genius against Oriental civilization, with beauty for the prize, so the Greek woman, with all her ability and all her weakness, is personified in the Homeric Helen.

THE ROMAN WOMAN

IN considering any phase of Roman life it is important always to remember that the Romans were the creators of an Empire—the greatest empire which the world has ever seen. To build this Empire demanded sacrifice, the victims of which were Art, Literature, and, last but not least, the Family. It is through the family that imperialism touches women. An Imperial State is a man's state; its motive power is force which men alone can exercise; its government demands men who are not readily influenced by women. In the family in an Imperial State the same phenomenon appears. The male element must predominate; the female element must take a back place. The woman may have a large share of social freedom; she may have considerable private influence upon the men of the Empire; but she is never such a force in an Imperial State as she is in other countries.

Among the women of ancient Rome, then, we must not expect to find many commanding personalities which stand out on the page of history as embodiments of the spirit of their age. There are many good women and many bad ones, many wise and many foolish; there is only one Agrippina.[1] In the dawn of Roman history, when the Empire was only a potentiality, there are few individual women who rise above the horizon of domestic life. From the very beginning Rome was a man's State. Early Roman law and custom placed

[1] The reference is, of course, to the wife of Germanicus; a heroic woman, if ever there was one.

women in a position in which, in spite of the gradual relaxation of legal restrictions, the steady growth of the imperial idea forced them to remain. In the family, the Roman woman was a very minor factor. The law placed all authority in the hands of the father of the family, who exercised, practically at his own discretion, a power of life and death over his children. All children, male and female, were equally subject to the paternal will, but the position of daughters was more galling than that of sons, inasmuch as their freedom of action was considerably less, and acts which were permitted to a son were regarded as crimes when committed by a daughter. A single instance will suffice to illustrate this. It was enough for a woman to have tasted wine to be held worthy of death; and, if we may believe Tertullian, the Romans first resorted to kissing in order that they might the more easily detect their women folk in such lapses from strict virtue. In fact, the early Roman woman was legally little better than a slave.

Yet it must not be supposed that her actual position was quite so arduous as law and custom prescribed. In the hands of a severe father, no doubt, the law was harshly exercised: but natural instincts of affection must in most cases have gone far to modify the law's severity. The early Romans, indeed, appear to have had a considerable respect for their womenkind, which had its origin, as some would have us believe, in the good service rendered to the infant Roman State by the Sabine maidens, whom the followers of Romulus had appropriated. It came about in this way. In the fourth month after the foundation of the city, so the tradition goes, Romulus, after having tried in various honest ways to get wives for his men, decided to resort to stratagem. He accordingly invited his Sabine and

Latin neighbours to come, with their wives and daughters, and attend the celebration of a religious festival. Suspecting nothing, the guests arrived. In the middle of the feast the Roman youths, rushing upon their guests, seized and carried off all the maidens. The despoiled Sabines were not unnaturally furious, and, as soon as they reached home, began to make preparations to avenge themselves. In the war which followed, both parties suffered severely and were soon reduced to a state of exhaustion. It was at this psychological moment that the Sabine women rendered their great service to the Roman State. Flinging themselves between the combatants, they implored their husbands and fathers to become reconciled. Their prayer was effective; and not only did the Romans and Sabines come to terms of peace, but the latter agreed to join the Romans in the foundation of their State, and thus opened the first chapter in the history of Roman expansion. Henceforth the Roman matron was accounted worthy of all men's respect.

This story, like so many other good stories, is probably apocryphal: but there are other incidents of this early time, possibly more reliable, which show to some extent that the Romans had a certain esteem and respect for their womenkind, and an admiration for the high qualities of a virtuous woman. The story of Lucretia is one of these. This beautiful and high-born lady was the wife of Tarquinius Collatinus, the nephew of Tarquinius Superbus, the last King of Rome. In an unfortunate hour for the house of Tarquin, the conversation one day at a feast, at which the King's sons and Collatinus were present turned upon women, and a dispute arose between the young men about the virtue of their wives. Nothing would satisfy the rival husbands but that they should all ride

off at once and pay a surprise visit to their wives. First they went to Rome, where the wives of the young princes, to their husbands' chagrin, were found to be so far neglectful of true womanly virtue as to be enjoying a magnificent banquet. Thence they rode to Collatia, where Lucretia lived. Though it was now late at night, that estimable lady was still spinning at the loom, surrounded by her handmaids; she was, in fact, behaving herself as the Roman conceived it the duty of every virtuous matron to behave. This spectacle of domestic virtue did not save her unrivalled beauty from rousing the evil passion of Sextus, one of the King's sons, who was among the company. Upon the following day he returned alone and was welcomed by Lucretia with the greatest hospitality as her husband's friend. The sequel is but too well known. Entering her chamber, he threatened her not merely with death, but with a disgrace which was worse than death. She had no choice but to yield. Broken-hearted, she sent for her husband and father; and, after telling them all and making them swear to avenge her, she plunged a sword into her heart and died. This tragedy opened up a new era in the history of Rome; for the Romans were so profoundly moved by the outrage offered to a virtuous matron that they rose and shook off for ever the tyranny of the Tarquins.

The tragic story of Virginia is no less instructive. The Republic had been in existence for a little over fifty years, when political circumstances, upon which it is not necessary to enter, placed the sole authority in the State in the hands of a board of ten Commissioners—the *Decemviri*, as they were called. The use they made of their power was often arbitrary and cruel; but the most lawless and the most cruel of

them all was Appius Claudius, a patrician of the patricians, whose house was notorious for reckless defiance of the law and for hatred of the people. Serving in the Roman army at the time was a certain centurion, Virginius by name, a stout plebeian, who had one precious and beautiful daughter, Virginia. This innocent child, as she went to and fro to school, had the misfortune to attract the attention of Claudius, the *decemvir*, who determined by any means, fair or foul, to get her into his power. As no better way presented itself, he suborned one of his parasites to seize the girl and claim her as his slave. Amid the indignation of the people she was dragged before the *decemvir;* but Appius found it impossible, owing to the temper of the crowd and the insistence of the girl's friends, to carry his base project further at the moment, and deferred the case until her father returned from the camp. The father came, but his remonstrances were in vain; the beautiful and innocent Virginia was adjudged the slave of Appius' freedman. Seeing that no more could be done, the unhappy father petitioned to be allowed to speak one word in private to his child. His request was allowed, and the father and daughter went a little apart. Suddenly Virginius snatched up a knife from a butcher's stall close by, and crying aloud, "There is no way but this to keep thee free," plunged it into his daughter's heart.

Just as the outrage against the chastity of Lucretia wrought the downfall of the Tarquins, so this attempt upon the virtue of an innocent Roman maiden roused to a blaze the smouldering resentment which the Roman people nurtured against the decemvirate. The Board was abolished, Claudius committed suicide to escape the fury of the people, and the old republican

government was restored. If in spite of the severity which custom allowed to be exercised towards women there had not existed in the Roman heart some more humane, tender, and respectful sentiment with regard to them, it would be hard to understand how these two outrages could have so deeply moved the people.

But even where there was no outrage, no tragedy which might move even the hardest to anger and compassion, the Romans appear to have recognized the claim which a virtuous matron had upon their consideration. In the story of Coriolanus we see a great Roman paying deference, even at the cost of his life, to the virtues of his wife and mother. Expelled from Rome by popular disturbance, Coriolanus, a fierce and determined man, returned at the head of a Volscian army, bent on destroying his native city. After a victorious march he encamped before the walls. The Romans, in alarm, sent embassy after embassy, composed of the highest personages in the State, to endeavour to assuage his wrath. All to no purpose: he would listen to none of them. At last, in despair, the noblest matrons of Rome, led by Veturia and Volumnia, the mother and wife of Coriolanus, went to his camp and, with prayers and reproaches, begged him to abandon his design. What he had refused to the highest men in Rome, he yielded to the dignity of these suppliant matrons; and, raising the siege, he returned to Corioli, only to fall a victim to the rage of the Volscians, who had been baulked of their prey.

It is significant also that from the earliest times one of the most honourable religious offices in Rome was filled by women, and women only. There is little in the mere institution of a college of priestesses, but there is much in the feeling with which they are

regarded. Nothing could surpass the reverence with which the Vestal Virgins were looked upon in Rome. They were exempted from the authority of their fathers; they were empowered to hold property in their own right; the *fasces* of the highest officials of State were lowered in their honour; to offend their modesty in word or deed was to incur the penalty of death; and wherever they went, in public or in private, the highest distinction and deference was always paid to them. On the other hand, if a Vestal Virgin broke her vows—and this occurred but a very few times—a terrible punishment was meted out to her. "A Vestal, who had defiled her chastity," Plutarch tells us, "was buried alive near the Colline Gate. There, within the city, is a bank of earth extending for some distance. It is called *Agger* in the Latin tongue. Therein is built an underground chamber, of no great size, to which steps lead down from above. The chamber contains a bed ready made, a lighted lamp, and a small assortment of provisions necessary to maintain life, such as bread, water in a jug, milk, and oil; as though it were desired to avoid the sacrilege of destroying by hunger a person consecrated by the most solemn ceremonies. The guilty Vestal is put in a litter, over the outside of which a covering is thrown and fastened down securely with thongs, so that not a sound can be heard from within; and thus she is carried through the Forum. The crowds stand aside in silence, and, without a word and in deep dejection, follow the litter. There is no spectacle more horrible than this, nor any day which Rome spends in deeper gloom. When the litter has reached the spot, the attendants loose the cords, and the high-priest, after offering up a silent prayer and stretching his hands towards heaven to

call the gods to witness the necessity of the deed, leads forth the woman closely veiled and sets her upon the ladder which goes down to the room below. Then he and the other priests turn away; and, when the woman has descended, the ladder is drawn up, and the chamber is covered with loads of earth, which are piled upon it until the spot is level with the rest of the mound."[1] Such was the dignity and importance of an office which the Romans considered their women worthy to hold; and such the merciless punishment for its violation. But in the family the attitude of the father towards his children, even in early times, was not so harsh as the letter of the law allowed; and though the legal position remained unchanged for many centuries, public opinion gradually put the law's utmost rigour in abeyance long before the law itself was actually abrogated.[2]

It is not until the period of the Punic Wars that we get any clear indication of the potentialities of the Roman woman. Up to this time she appears to have remained contentedly in that subordinate position in the State and in the family which the law allotted to her, and which she filled with considerable dignity. The Punic Wars of the third century B.C. were a turning-point in the career of Rome. Her success in the titanic struggle brought her not merely glory, but wealth. Roman commerce spread along the coasts of the Mediterranean; Roman armies returned laden with the precious spoil of the wealthiest nation of the world. Now, for the first time in history, the women of Rome were laid open to the

[1] Plutarch, *Numa*, 10.

[2] In the time of Augustus public opinion was so strong that a father who beat his son to death was nearly torn to pieces by the indignant fathers of Rome, and only escaped with his life by the direct intervention of the Emperor.

attack of those most insidious foes—leisure and luxury. And they fell. The decline, of course, was gradual, and it first showed itself in an unusual indulgence in fine raiment and personal adornments. Old-fashioned Romans, with the elder Cato at their head, were scandalized, and sought to repress the growing evil by legislation. In 213 B.C. one of the tribunes—a man named Oppius—summoned up sufficient courage to bring forward a measure forbidding any woman to possess more than half an ounce of gold, to wear variegated garments, or to ride in a horse-carriage within one mile of any town. The oppressors congratulated themselves on their success; but they reckoned without their host. After supporting the indignities put upon them for some years, the women of Rome at last revolted; and so prolonged and insistent was the clamour they made that the objectionable law had at length to be repealed. A reaction now set in. Not merely were women secured in their personal trinkets, but they began to amass wealth by testamentary bequests. For some thirty years the ladies had their way; but Cato still had his eye upon them. At last he moved. Assisted by one Voconius, he propounded a law which, while leaving ladies' garments and means of conveyance severely alone, struck more deeply and subtly at the root of the abhorred evil. It was enacted that no woman should be able to acquire property by will. There were not wanting those who sympathized with the women in their harsh treatment, and among these was one affectionate father, Annius Asellus. This man had one daughter, Annia, whom he loved tenderly and to whom he wished to leave a large legacy. Now the *lex Voconia* was not made applicable to the *aerarii*, or lowest class of Roman citizen; and what did the good

Asellus do but sacrifice his position and enrol himself as an *aerarius*, so as to be exempt from the provisions of the Voconian law. By this artifice he was able to leave his daughter a large bequest, though in the end the poor girl was robbed of it by the villainy of a magistrate. Isolated cases of sympathy and sacrifice like this, however, were ineffectual as a protest. The Act remained upon the statute-book, and not only that, but before long a further measure was passed, depriving women of the right of acquiring wealth by succession.

This question of holding property, in spite of a gradual slipping off of legal shackles, remained for long one of the greatest restrictions upon the freedom of women. In the meantime, however, causes had been at work which gave the potentialities of Roman womanhood an opportunity of developing themselves to a marked extent. Greece had passed beneath Roman sway, and Rome and the East had come into closer touch than at any previous period. The influence of Greece upon the whole of Roman life was profound; and it was as much on the women of Rome as on the men that Greek art and culture cast their glamour. As was perhaps natural where women were concerned, the fashion of dress was one of the first things to respond to the new influence. In early republican days the dress of a Roman woman was simple and serviceable. It consisted of a thin cloak of wool, the *toga*, which was worn alike by men and women. This voluminous garment, which was an elliptical piece of cloth at least twice the height of the wearer in width, and sometimes three times his height in length, was arranged in various ways, though how exactly the effect was produced is still very obscure. The most usual way of putting on the *toga*,

at least for men, appears to have been as follows: First, fold back a part of the cloth until its shape becomes practically semicircular; then throw one end of the cloth, with the fold outside, over the left shoulder, leaving sufficient in front to fall to the feet. The long end at the back is then gathered round with the right hand under the right arm, carried across the breast, and finally flung once more across the left shoulder. Beneath the garment, arranged in this fashion or similarly, women used to wear a thin vest, the *tunica interior*, which reached to the knees and was belted round the waist; while for out-of-door use they employed a thick woolly overall, called *ricinium*. This simplicity in dress was maintained by Roman women for some centuries. Modifications no doubt there were, but fashion found expression not so much in new styles of dress as in new adjustments of the old. The age of the Punic Wars, of the conquest of Greece, and of the campaigns in Asia changed all that. Commodities of all kinds, hitherto unknown to the Romans, were now imported in abundance, and among these were new stuffs and embroideries and trimmings for clothes which were destined to revolutionize the Roman woman's idea of dress. *Graecia capta Romam cepit.* That famous saying was as true of female dress as of the high arts; and Greek fashions, now adopted for the first time, gave to the dress of Roman ladies a general scheme which, in spite of the rapid fluctuations of ephemeral modes, remained unchanged for several centuries. Under the Empire, linen, cotton, and silks came into general use, and the improvement of technical processes resulted in an infinitely greater variety of stuffs than had ever been known before. Through all these adventitious changes, however, and through all the vagaries of fashion, the

central ideas of a Roman lady's dress remained but little changed from the type which Greek influence had impressed upon the second century B.C. The following garments then were, so to speak, the substratum of every decent Roman woman's attire. First of all there came the *tunica interior* or *subucula*, which was a long linen or woollen vest fastened about the waist with a belt. It usually reached below the knee, but its length could be varied by its being pulled up or down through the restraining belt. Over the *tunica* came the *strophium* and *cingulum*. The former, in the case of matrons, was a kind of stiff corset, but younger women found it sufficient merely to wind linen bands round the chest to keep the figure trim.[1] The *cingulum* was a girdle worn round the waist just beneath the breasts. Stockings, in the modern form, were unknown, but their place was taken by *fasciae*, or leg-swathings, somewhat analogous to puttees. One other of these intimate garments should be mentioned—the *feminalia*, which have acquired a particular fame because the Emperor Augustus used to wear them to protect himself from the cold.[2]

Of the outer garments the most important was the *stola*. This was the distinctive dress of the Roman matron,[3] and quite superseded the *toga*, which, in the case of women, became the uniform of the disreputable. The *stola* was a flowing garment which reached to the ankles and was bordered at the bottom with a flounce. Beneath the breast it was gathered in soft folds; and the sleeves, which reached to the elbows, instead of being stitched as at the present day, were fastened along the upper seam by clasps. Out of

[1] Catull. lxiv. 65; Ov. *A. A.* iii. 274, 622; Ter. *Eun.* ii. 3, 23.
[2] Suet. *Oct.* 82.
[3] Horace, *Satires*, i. 2, 94.

doors every respectable Roman woman wore a *palla*, which was a kind of large shawl to be worn over the *stola*. It was put on over the left shoulder, drawn across the back, and brought over or under the right shoulder and tucked round the body. The *palla* gradually went out of fashion under the Empire and was replaced by the *dalmatica*, a cloak with embroidered sleeves, made of white wool, linen, or cotton. Two other garments deserve mention: a kind of mantilla which was worn over the head, and a thin filmy robe, bordered with gold, the *cyclas*, which was reserved for specially great occasions. Amid all this attention to dress, Roman ladies did not, of course, neglect their foot-gear. On the contrary, they were most particular about it. In the house they were content to wear sandals or slippers, but when they went abroad they indulged in a variety of gaily coloured and delicately made boots, fancifully bedecked with ribbons and laces.

Hand-in-hand with elaboration in dress went elaboration in toilette. Nature, as fashion at all ages of the world seems to require, had to give place to art. The production of a complexion became one of the high arts, and rouge and white enamel were essentials in every lady's toilet-case. Her coiffure was a matter of the most anxious consideration; and with the aid of her hair-dressers and their curling-tongs, she managed to produce some beautiful, and some terrific, effects. What could be more charming in its artful simplicity than the wavy curls of Agrippina as she is represented in her bust in the Capitol! And what more appalling than the elaborate head-dress immortalized in the well-known bust of the Empress Messalina! The natural colour of the hair was, of course, the last thing to be admired; so a woman had

to have recourse to black or auburn dyes, and at length science produced a special pomade for the purpose, the famous *sapo batava*. For those ladies whose hair fell short of luxuriance there were wigs; and when the taste of Imperial Rome declared for yellow hair, the wilds of Germany were ransacked by traders to find the wherewithal to make wigs for the fashionable. Wealth brought with it too the well-filled jewel-box. Long hairpins of gold, silver, and ivory, combs of ivory, boxwood, and tortoiseshell, gold fillets studded with gems, hair nets of gold thread, patches, scents, pomades, rings, necklaces, earrings, ropes of pearls, chains of gold, gems, and precious stones of every description now littered the dressing-table, or lay hid in the jewel-box of every Roman woman of any pretence to rank.

The claims of the person having been satisfied, the needs of the mind came in for attention. From early times girls at Rome had been educated in the elements of learning—in simple reading, writing, and arithmetic—which were taught at the primary schools which boys and girls alike attended. Up before dawn, with a lamp to light the way and an attendant to carry her satchel, the little Roman maiden of seven years or over would trudge off to the portico where her schoolmaster wielded his rod. For some years this life continued, with but few holidays and those far between, until she had attained some proficiency in the rudiments. Then, most probably, her education in the scholastic sense came to an end. Her brothers and boy schoolmates, if their parents wished it, could proceed from the primary school to the secondary, where geography, history, and ethics were taught; where the art of elocution was assiduously practised, and the works of the great Greek and Roman poets

were carefully read and expounded; but it was enough for the girl to have learnt how to read, write, and cipher; she had then to learn her domestic duties. Such was the old Roman ideal of female education, in which the increase of wealth and the growing independence of women were about to effect such remarkable changes.

Wealth had given women more licence by enabling them to perform vicariously many of their household duties; and social freedom, which had never been so restricted in Rome as in Greece and the East, was yearly becoming greater. Leisure called for occupation; and upon this idle crowd of Roman women the wave of Hellenism and Orientalism broke with irresistible power, and gave a great impetus to those potentialities which, lying up to this practically dormant, were henceforth to develop themselves with greater and ever greater intensity.

Generally speaking, these potentialities were comprised in two extremes: a Roman woman had in her the makings either of a blue-stocking or of a rake. To those, and they were numerous, whose aspirations lay towards intellectuality, Greek literature and art came as a revelation, after the somewhat barren field of Roman letters. To excel in Greek, to be deeply versed in Greek poetry and in Greek philosophy, became the object of their most arduous labours. One of the earliest, and a type of the best, of these learned women was the famous Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi. This remarkable woman, a daughter of the great house of Scipio, was one of the most accomplished of her day, and was a pioneer in the intellectual movement which was just beginning to spread among the women of the Roman upper classes. Still, with all her learning, Cornelia combined many of

the stern virtues of the old Roman matron. The care of her family was always paramount in her mind, and her education and refinement found their highest use in the formation of her children's characters. "Cornelia," says Plutarch, "undertook the care of her family and her husband's property, and showed herself so prudent, so fond of her children, and of so exalted a character, that Tiberius was judged to have done well in dying in place of such a wife. . . . Tiberius and Caius (her two sons) were brought up by her so carefully that they became, beyond dispute, the most accomplished of all the Roman youth; and this they owed, perhaps, more to their excellent upbringing than to their natural parts."[1] And when the sons, to whom the prime of her life had been devoted, came to their untimely ends, Cornelia displayed that fortitude which her lineage demanded, and sought to the end her consolation in intellectual pleasures. Let us hear Plutarch again on the subject: "Cornelia is said to have supported her misfortunes with a high and noble spirit, and to have said of the sacred ground on which her sons were murdered, that they had a tomb worthy of them. She lived near Misenum, without making any change in her usual mode of life. She had many friends, and her hospitable table was always crowded with guests. Greeks and savants were constantly about her, and kings sent and received presents from her. To all her visitors and friends she was a most agreeable companion: she would tell them of the life and habits of her father Africanus, and, what is most surprising, would speak of her sons without showing sorrow or shedding a tear. This made some think that her understanding had been impaired by old age or the

[1] Plutarch, *Tiberius Gracchus*, i.

Giraudon

CORNELIA, MOTHER OF THE GRACCHI

FROM THE GROUP BY CAVELIER IN THE LUXEMBOURG

greatness of her sorrows, and that she was dull to all sense of her misfortunes: though in reality such people were too dull to see what a support it is against grief to have a noble disposition and to be of noble birth and breeding, and that, though fortune often baffles virtue's attempts to defend herself from evils, she cannot deprive virtue of the power of enduring them with fortitude." [1]

Another of these remarkable women was Aurelia, the mother of Julius Caesar. Like Cornelia, she combined culture with a devotion to her children, to whom she gave the benefit of her wisdom and sympathy. She did not strive to shine herself; she was content to seek her fame in the glory of her son. In the first real crisis of Caesar's life, when he sought election, against strong opposition, to the high post of Pontifex Maximus, and when the chances of success or of a defeat which meant extinction, were about equally balanced, Aurelia, though she wept as she parted with him at the door of their house, did not seek to restrain him, because he was but obeying the high ambition with which she had herself inspired him. And while by her wisdom she was influencing his conduct in public life, she was not forgetful of his interests nearer home. It was her own watchful eye that saved Pompeia, Caesar's wife, from falling a victim to the seductions of the notorious young debauchee, P. Clodius; and though once indeed Clodius succeeded in evading her vigilance, and, during the celebration of a religious festival, managed to enter Caesar's house in the disguise of a woman, it was not long before he was detected, and it was Aurelia herself who, torch in hand, hunted through the house until she found the would-be lover cowering in a servant's room, and

[1] Plutarch, *Caius Gracchus*, xix.

drove him out of doors. Educated, energetic, virtuous, and sympathetic, Aurelia was one of those women who, like Cornelia, were makers of Roman history in so far as they moulded by their constant care the characters of some of Rome's greatest men; and in one point Aurelia was more fortunate than the mother of the Gracchi, for she died in the midst of her son's prosperity and fame.[1]

Another woman of this period who should not be forgotten was Laelia, the mother-in-law of Cicero. She had not, perhaps, the erudition of a Cornelia; it was the grace of her conversation and the purity of her language which made her remarkable. "When I listen," says Cicero in the *Orator*, "to my mother-in-law, Laelia—for women preserve the traditional purity of accent the best because, being limited in their intercourse with the multitude, they retain their early impressions—I could imagine that I hear Plautus or Naevius speaking; the pronunciation is so plain and simple, so perfectly free from all affectation and display; from which I infer that such was the accent of her father and his ancestors—not harsh like the pronunciation to which I have just referred, not broad nor rustic nor rugged, but terse, smooth, and flowing."[2]

From this time forward the roll of accomplished Roman women is ever growing, and the limits of education were continually extending. Oratory occupied the attention of some, letters of others, while others pursued music or the lighter accomplishments. When the Triumvirs proposed to levy a special tax upon Roman matrons to defray the expenses of the war against Brutus and Cassius, Hortensia appeared before them on behalf of the injured ladies and argued their case with so much spirit and ingenuity

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Cæsar*. [2] Cicero, *De Oratore*, vol. iii. 12, § 44.

that the tax was remitted.[1] About the same time Rome was agitated by the conduct of a certain Afrania, who was of a very litigious spirit and insisted upon pleading her own causes before the Praetor. The gentle Cornelia, the beloved wife of the great Pompey, was a most accomplished woman. "Besides her youthful beauty," Plutarch tells us, "she possessed other charms: for she was well versed in literature, in playing on the lyre, and in geometry, and she had been used to listen to philosophical discourses with profit. Besides this, she had a disposition free from all affectation and display of pedantry—blemishes which such acquirements usually breed in women."[2]

The wife of Maecenas, the friend and minister of the Emperor Augustus, was, as we learn from Horace, an accomplished singer. Agrippina, the mother of Nero, was a woman of letters and wrote a book of Memoirs, of which Tacitus availed himself in writing the history of the period. Calpurnia, Pliny's wife, used to sing her husband's verses, and always took a lively interest in his literary pursuits. Martial, in speaking of a young girl about to be married, says that she had the eloquence of Plato blended with the austerity of the philosophy of the Porch, and that she wrote verses worthy of a chaste Sappho. Statius breathes the hope that he will be able to marry his daughter well, because she is a cultured woman. The close of the first century of our era saw a woman, Sulpicia, held in great esteem as a poetess. Martial says of her: "Let every girl, whose wish it is to please a single man, read Sulpicia; let every man, whose wish it is to please a single maid, read Sulpicia. Not hers to write the frenzy of Medea or tell the

[1] Valerius Maximas, *de Factis Dictisque Memorabilibus*, viii., 3, 3.
[2] Plutarch, *Pompeius*, 55.

banquet of accursed Thyestes: she does not believe the loves of Scylla and of Adonis ever were. Her theme is pure and loyal love, jest, pleasantry, and humour."[1]

At its best, in the Cornelias, Aurelias, Calpurnias, this intellectual class of women was great and inspiring; but its best was rare. The majority of the women who pursued the new learning did so either because it was the fashion or because it tickled their vanity to be thought intellectual. Women in the latter days of the Republic and under the Empire had every opportunity of displaying their attainments. "What Roman," asks Cornelius Nepos, "is ashamed to take his wife to a feast?" And not only did women take part in all the reputable private entertainments of men, but appeared in all public places, in the Forum and in the theatre. A desire to be brilliant in conversation, to be a judicious critic in literature, to be discriminating in the drama was a natural outcome of this social freedom.

There was, however, a more insidious force at work, driving the women of Rome into intellectual pursuits. It was, in a sense, the instinct of self-preservation. During the century which followed the conquest of Greece and Rome's first close acquaintance with the East, and during the long *pax Romana* beneath the sway of Augustus, Rome was inundated by women from Greece and the East whose grace of wit, added to their easy morals, was not slow in captivating the Roman youth. It may as well be acknowledged at once that the average respectable Roman woman of the period was the grand type of all imperial women. She was mannish and devoid of true tenderness and passion. There was no mystery about her; she never stirred the imagination of

[1] Martialis, x. 35.

the poet: when Catullus, Horace, Propertius, Tibullus are moved to write about a woman, she is always a courtesan and not a Roman lady of virtue. Indeed, the most representative Roman woman, though on the highest plane, is perhaps the elder Agrippina. Her character is summed up by Tacitus in the words: "Her masculine preoccupation left no place for such feminine frailties in this domineering and ambitious soul." She saved a Roman army from destruction by her firmness and courage; she "took upon herself the functions of a general and distributed medicines and clothing to all the soldiers who were wounded or in want"; "she was a greater power in the army than legates or commanders, and she, a woman, had quelled a mutiny which the Emperor's authority could not check"; she was "a mother of many children and a lady of spotless reputation";[1] she was, in short, a woman to whom one might address an epic but never a sonnet. She had no room in her character for "feminine frailties," none, it may be, for the softer feminine virtues and graces by which women influence and charm. And if Agrippina, so great and noble a woman, was wanting, how about the hundreds of thousands of lesser women? Of no account in the Empire, they were in danger, before the femininity of the fascinating though frail strangers who were gradually drawing to themselves the allegiance of Roman men, of losing even such influence as they exercised upon brothers, husbands, and lovers. To maintain their place they had recourse to higher education. It is not, of course, to be supposed that the change was made consciously; there was perhaps not one who said in her heart: "These creatures are ousting me; I shall become accomplished, brilliant, and so win back my own." It

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, i. 69; ii., 25.

was all unconscious, an instinct almost of self-defence. In femininity they could not hope to surpass their rivals —true femininity was impossible in a reputable Roman lady—so they turned to brilliant accomplishments, to intellectuality, to virile strenuousness, as the means of combating their progress. The struggle, however, successful though it was to some extent, tore from Roman women the last vestige of true womanhood. When the craze for higher education first seized them, the most cultured women of the day, as we have seen, still retained in spite of their attainments a strong sense of their duty towards, and power in, their home and family. But under the Empire this saving sentiment evaporated, and the main idea of those women who posed as intellectuals was to be thought witty, brilliant, and good company. The claims of the home and family were sacrificed to notoriety and personal success.

Notoriety, indeed, and excitement became the ruling passions of thousands upon thousands of women. It was the women who first started the wild orgies of the Bacchanalia, and indulged in paroxysms of frenzy and indecency; the later admission of men only intensified the excitement and enlarged the opportunities of debauchery. At these disgraceful gatherings their conduct at last became so grave a scandal that the law had to interfere. It was the love of excitement which drew the women to the theatre to see the gladiators fight, or to see the wild beasts tear their wretched victims limb from limb. It was the love of notoriety that induced some of the noblest ladies in Rome to appear in the amphitheatre dressed as gladiators and engage in mimic combat. The indulgence in pleasurable excitements led to extravagance, and extravagance to recklessness and

knavery, and sometimes even to crime. The famous conspiracy of Catiline was largely supported by women who, as Sallust says, "had originally maintained their gigantic expenditure by the proceeds of infamy, and then, when age had put a limit to their revenue, though not to their extravagance, had piled up a vast accumulation of debts. Through their help Catiline believed that he could tamper with the servile population of Rome, could set the city on fire, and could either attach the women's husbands to his cause or have them murdered."[1] One of these women, Fulvia by name, ultimately betrayed the conspiracy, possibly with a view to grasping the reward offered by the Senate for information. Rapacity was no less prevalent in more reputable circles. In the provinces great ladies restored their shattered fortunes by the grossest extortions. By the reign of Tiberius this practice had become such a scandal that an endeavour was made to prohibit the wives of governors from accompanying them to their provinces. The attempt was unsuccessful; but the arguments put forward by Caecina, who proposed the reform, are instructive. "It was not without good reason," he declared, "that our ancestors determined to prohibit women from being taken into allied and foreign countries. The presence of women with the troops is embarrassing in time of peace because of their luxurious habits, and in time of war on account of their natural timidity, and gives the Roman army the appearance of barbarians on the march. The female sex is not only physically feeble and incapable of enduring fatigue and hardships; given the opportunity, it becomes also cruel, intriguing, and ambitious. The women walk about among the soldiers, and the centurions are at

[1] Sallustius, *Catilina*, 25.

their beck and call. Only lately a woman has presided over the evolutions of the cohorts and the manœuvres of the legions. You will remember that, whenever a man is accused of extortion, the gravest accusations are always against his wife. The most unprincipled of the provincials invariably attach themselves to the wives of the officials; matters of business are taken up and decided by these women. Instead of one, there are now two suites and two courts; obedience is exacted to orders more peremptory and at the same time more capricious than those of any man; and women, who in former days were subject to the restrictions imposed by the *Lex Oppia* and other statutes, have now burst their bonds, and rule supreme in the home, in the tribunals, and even in the armies."[1] Here is a striking picture, a little overdrawn it may be, of these Imperial women: hard, unprincipled, domineering, devoid of all the charm and mystery which surround the true woman.

From the age of Juvenal to the present time the gross immorality of imperial Rome has found many censors and historians. It has afforded many a mark for the arrow of the satirist, and many a theme for the lucubrations of the philosopher and the moralist. Without crediting all that we are told, there is still sufficient ground for believing that for some centuries Roman society was permeated by a deplorable moral depravity. The tendency first began to be marked during the last two centuries of the Republic. "Both sexes alike trampled on their modesty."[2] The first outburst was the immoderate licence which produced the scandals of the Bacchanalia. "These mysterious rites," says Livy, "were at first imparted to a few, but were afterwards communicated to great numbers, both men

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, iii. 33. [2] Sallustius, *Catilina*, i. 13.

and women. To their religious performances were added the pleasures of wine and feasting, to allure a greater number of proselytes. When wine, lascivious discourse, night, and the mingling of the sexes had extinguished every sentiment of modesty, then debaucheries of every kind began to be practised, as every person found at hand that sort of enjoyment to which he was disposed by the passion most prevalent in his nature. Nor were they confined to one species of vice, the promiscuous intercourse of free-born men and women. From this storehouse of villainy proceeded false witnesses, counterfeit seals, false evidences, and pretended discoveries. In the same place, too, were perpetrated secret murders,"[1] and other unmentionable infamies. "To think nothing unlawful was the grand maxim of their religion."[2] In Rome alone these abominable rites numbered thousands of women among their devotees.[3]

In these sad scenes of revelry and devilment, though they were so soon suppressed, the Roman woman revealed the depths of immorality of which she was capable. It is significant that within the century three Vestal Virgins were executed for immorality in its most heinous form; and we may well believe that Sallust's picture of Sempronia is a very type of many a Roman matron of that day. "Sempronia," he writes, "had committed many crimes of a boldness worthy of a man. Blest alike in family and beauty, in husband and children, she was well read in Greek and Roman literature; could sing, play, and dance more gracefully than an honest woman need; and had many of the other accomplishments of a riotous life. She cared for nothing less than for decency and modesty: indeed, it would be hard to decide whether she was more prodi-

[1] Livy, xxxix. c. 8. [2] *Ibid.* xxxix. c. 13. [3] *Ibid.* xxxix. 15.

gal of her money or of her reputation ; and her desires were so fierce that she offered her favours more often than she was asked for them. Ere this she had more than once broken her engagements, forsworn her trust, and been privy to a murder : an extravagance which outran her resources had sent her headlong down the road to ruin. Still there was nothing despicable in her intellect : she could write verses, turn a jest, and converse with modesty, suavity, or wantonness, as the occasion required : in fact, she contained a rich fund of wit and humour."[1]

How did it come about, one well may ask? How did those Roman matrons who were of a proverbial austerity and virtue become so morally depraved? Probably the truth is that potentially a large number of the virtuous Roman matrons had always been Sempronias : they had but lacked the opportunity, the freedom, the leisure, which enabled their descendants of the late Republic to develop their latent capacities. But as a secondary cause of this moral dissolution it is impossible to deny the claims of the Roman marriage system. Under this system marriage could be contracted in various ways which were classed under the two headings, *cum conventione* and *sine conventione*. Marriages *cum conventione* could be solemnized under three different forms : *confarreatio*, *coemptio*, and *usus*. The ceremony of *confarreatio* was the most solemn of the three. It had to be performed, in the presence of at least ten witnesses, by the Pontifex Maximus or by one of the higher Flamines. This form of marriage was confined to the patricians : and it gradually fell into disuse, until at last it came to be practised only by a few families who had a hereditary connection with certain priesthoods, eligibility to which depended upon

[1] Sallustius, *Catilina*, i. 24.

being born of parents married in this fashion. The ceremony of *coemptio* was not of a religious nature like *confarreatio*. It was a purely legal bargain, a formal conveyance by purchase of the woman to the man such as might be executed in respect of any other property. The third form, *usus*, consisted merely in cohabitation for a year, subject to certain restrictions. All other marriages were marriages *sine conventione*.

Though all these forms of marriage were of equal validity before the law, it made a great deal of difference in the life of the married pair whether they were united *sine conventione* or *cum conventione*. By a marriage *cum conventione* a woman passed absolutely into the power of her husband. She became a member of his family and was legally his daughter and the sister of her own children. Her property became her husband's: and he could exercise against her all the powers of a Roman father, except apparently the right of selling her into slavery. The loss of this right, however, appears to have been compensated by the peculiar power to transfer her to some one else for a consideration, subject of course to her consent.[1] On the other hand, a wife under this form of marriage became identified with her husband's family, looked after its interests, and stood in a close natural relation to her children. The woman married *sine conventione* occupied a very different position. Her husband had no power over her at all. She remained always in her father's family and subject to his control alone. Though she was a married woman, her father could chastise her, and even separate her, against her will, from her husband. Thus a woman was no longer

[1] The younger Cato made over his wife, Marcia, in this way to Hortensius, and took her back after the latter's death. The curious details of this transaction will be found in Plutarch's *Life of Cato the Younger*, 25, 52.

even of the same family as her children, and it was impossible for her to occupy the same position in her husband's household as a wife *cum conventione*. On the other hand, married life was possibly easier, and the husband more amenable, when his authority was curtailed: besides, as public opinion gradually reduced the paternal authority to a minimum, a wife who remained under her father's control was practically independent. For these reasons, and probably also because the property which a woman might inherit when her father died would not pass into her husband's hands if she were his wife *sine conventione*, this form of marriage gradually superseded all the other forms, at least among the higher classes. It was, however, a much looser tie, in which the sense of responsibility in both parties was sensibly loosened. As this form of marriage became more popular, divorces, partly as an outcome of the looser tie, became more frequent. In early times the man alone had the power to divorce, and the grounds upon which he acted were usually sufficient. The proceedings in divorce too were vested with a certain gravity. A marriage contracted by the religious ceremony of *confarreatio* had to be dissolved by another religious ceremony, *diffarreatio*: the legal contract known as *coemptio* could only be broken by the legal formality of *remancipatio*. So long as these forms of marriage continued in vogue, divorce was kept within some bounds. The sanctity of the marriage tie, which through church doctrines has become an accepted, though frequently forgotten, habit of our thought, was represented to the ancient Roman solely by the ceremony of *confarreatio*. As this religious form gradually fell into disuse, and its place was taken by the purely legal and much looser form *sine conventione*, the Romans came to regard marriage as a con-

dition dependent solely upon mutual consent. If this were wanting, either party was considered justified in declaring his or her intention of putting an end to the connection. The *nuptiales tabulae*, the tablets bearing the signatures of the witnesses, etc., might be formally broken; or the woman might be deprived of her keys and turned out of the house. Either proceeding was sufficient to dissolve the union, but it was customary for the objecting party to serve a notice in writing upon the divorcee. The State did not interfere in the matter; marriage was regarded as a private relationship which might be dissolved in a private manner without the intervention or sanction of any public authority. Under this fatal facility divorces became rife and were made upon the flimsiest pretexts. Marriage meant little or nothing; it was little more than regulated free love. In the days of Cicero, Caelius could write, still with some surprise, that a certain Paula Valeria had left her husband for no apparent reason and was about to marry another. The Emperor Augustus endeavoured to regulate the ever-increasing number of divorces by decreeing that in every case of divorce a formal document of dissolution should be executed in the presence of seven adult Roman citizens. Such an endeavour on the part of an Emperor who had forced one man to divorce his wife so that he might marry her himself, and another to do the same so that he might be free to marry one of the Emperor's daughters, was a little Gilbertian and foredoomed to failure. At all events, it was ineffectual. Some fifty years later Seneca declares: "The ladies do not reckon the years by the number of the consuls, but by the number of their husbands." And, later still, we are assured by Tertullian that "divorce is now looked upon as the sole fruit of

marriage." These words of Tertullian reveal another evil of the time, a corollary of the lax marriage system and of the facility of divorce, namely, the sterility of marriage. Among the higher classes in Rome the birth-rate began to decrease to an alarming extent. It was not merely the decrease which is unavoidable in a highly civilized and highly strung community; it was the direct and conscious result of an unwillingness to undertake the trouble and responsibilities of a family. Augustus attempted to stay the evil by granting peculiar privileges to matrons who had three children, and by imposing disabilities on celibates and married people without families. But the effort was useless: the canker lay in the heart of the social fabric.

Roman society, then, in its sexual relations, was utterly demoralized. The Roman women, especially the women of the higher classes, found in marriage a legalized encouragement of licentiousness. The last pages of the Republic are sullied by the records of the Sempronias to whom debauchery and murder were commonplaces; of the Clodias whose passions made them oblivious of the closest relationships; and of the Fausta Cornelias, with whom gallantry was the serious occupation of life. But atrocious as these women were, they were surpassed by the women of the Empire. It was not perhaps that the latter were more immoral; it was that their immorality was more recondite, more bizarre, and more brazen. To avoid the penalties of the law many thousands of women, wives and mothers, enrolled themselves as women of pleasure upon the lists kept by the city magistrates. But it is impossible to repeat the details of their debaucheries; they must be left for those to discover who can read the pages of Juvenal, Martial, Suetonius,

Tacitus, and others who have recorded in prose and verse the life of this epoch. Let it suffice to say that there was no excess which the human mind could imagine in which these women did not indulge; there was no form of immorality, however gross and unnatural, which did not find its devotee.

History has given us, as a type of the dissoluteness of the age, the Empress Messalina, whose example, thanks to her exalted position, had an exceptionally evil influence upon Roman society. This extraordinary woman was descended, upon her mother's side, from the house of the Caesars; she was, in fact, a great-granddaughter of the noble Octavia, the sister of the Emperor Augustus. Beyond the mere relationship, however, Messalina bore no affinity to her illustrious ancestress. Married while still a girl to the Emperor Claudius, she soon had Rome ringing with her infamous doings. Though the pictures drawn for us by Juvenal are no doubt highly coloured, though the account given of her by Tacitus may to some extent be tinged with the bias of Agrippina, whose memoirs he used extensively, there is unfortunately no doubt that her life was one course of unblushing sensuality. With the Emperor's freedmen, especially with the notorious Narcissus, she was not long, by a liberal bestowal of her favours, in coming to an understanding. As events proved, this alliance was essential to her safety. It would have been impossible for her to have pursued her amorous caprices undetected, unless the freedmen who enjoyed the Emperor's confidence had been her adherents. The basis of an agreement was easily found. The Empress concealed the freedmen's peculations and villainies, while they concealed her amours. The freedmen's part of the bargain was possibly the more arduous of the two. The imagination boggles

at the extent of the Empress's gallantries. They ranged over high and low, rich and poor. Not content with the opportunities which her position afforded her in sufficient abundance, she used to steal from the palace by night, disguised in a yellow wig, and frequent the houses of ill fame.[1] It was she who did most to encourage, if she did not originate, the fashion which became so prevalent among the noble ladies of Rome, and which Juvenal lashes with merciless satire, of having sordid intrigues with slaves, gladiators, and actors. And her hatred of those who refused her favours was no less furious than her passion for those who accepted them. The tragedy of Appius Silanus will speak for itself. The graceful person of this distinguished nobleman made him an object of Messalina's merciless desires; but he rejected with firmness all her advances. In a moment her passion turned to hate, and she determined to destroy the unhappy man. Helped by her paramour, Narcissus, she devised a subtle and curious plot. The life and character of Silanus she knew to be unimpeachable; but she also understood well the timid and suspicious character of the Emperor, her husband. If Silanus was to fall, it must be through the Emperor's fears. Early one morning, then, Narcissus hurried into the Emperor's room and told him, in accents of well-feigned solicitude, that he had seen, in a dream, the Emperor murdered by Silanus. Messalina, who was present, immediately cried out that she too had had a similar dream. Claudius was terrified out of his wits; and, as chance would have it, at that very moment Silanus appeared to keep an appointment which the Emperor had made with him. The Emperor, forgetting in his alarm that he had invited Silanus to come, regarded his appearance at

[1] Juvenal, vi. 115 *et seq.*

this moment as a confirmation of his freedman's dream. Messalina and Narcissus saw their advantage and were not slow to press it, with the result that the Emperor issued an order for the immediate arrest and execution of the unfortunate Silanus.[1] The same remorseless cruelty fell upon rivals of her own sex. In an unlucky day for herself, one of the most beautiful women of the time, Poppaea Sabina, thought to rival Messalina in the affections of a certain dancer, Mnester by name. With an effrontery almost humorous, Messalina caused the wretched Poppaea to be arraigned for adultery, and, seeing an opportunity of killing two birds with one stone, decided that Valerius Asiaticus, whose beautiful gardens on the Pincian Hill the Empress coveted, should be cited as the partner of Poppaea's guilt. To make sure of her victims' destruction, Messalina secured that the trial should take place privately in the palace. Conviction was, of course, a foregone conclusion; so poor Poppaea committed suicide before the case was ended, while Asiaticus, after being formally condemned, put himself to death.[2]

For several years Messalina pursued this infamous life with impunity. But the hour came at last when she went too far, and when the freedmen whom her favours had conciliated found it too dangerous to conceal her malpractices any longer. Gaius Silius was a young nobleman of high connections and considerable personal attractions. Whether it was from ambition, fear, or reciprocal passion, it is difficult to say; but Silius did not, like Silanus, reject the proferred love of Messalina. The infatuation of the Empress for her new lover was not evanescent as so

[1] Suetonius, *Claudius*, 37; cf. Tacitus, *Annales*, xi. 29, where the murder is mentioned incidentally.

[2] Tacitus, *Annales*, xi. 1–3.

many had been. "Careless of concealment, she went continually with a numerous retinue to his house: she haunted his steps: she showered upon him wealth and honours; and, at last, as though Empire had actually passed into another's hands, the slaves, the freedmen, the very furniture of the Emperor were to be seen in the possession of the Empress's paramour."[1] She induced Silius to divorce his wife, and promised to marry him when Claudius died. As the Emperor showed no inclination to accommodate himself to their designs, Silius became impatient, and urged the Empress to make away with her husband—a course which Messalina had not sufficient confidence in her lover to take. Partly, however, to satisfy his wishes and partly to gratify her own love of violating every decency, the Empress consented to go through the form of marriage with Silius. It was a most extraordinary, unparalleled piece of audacity. The occasion of the Emperor's absence at Ostia was taken to hold this astonishing wedding with all the usual celebrations. While the festivities were on foot and Rome was agape at this culminating atrocity, the freedmen, who saw their position threatened in the person of the Emperor, were taking steps to enlighten him on the subject. At first the Emperor was incredulous, but the corroborative evidence soon became too grave to be disregarded, and Claudius hastily departed for Rome. The news of his approach fell like a thunderbolt upon the merry company who were holding high revel in the house of Silius. They scattered and fled. Silius sought the Forum, and pretended to be immersed in business; Messalina took refuge in the gardens of Lucullus. Thence, in the hope of assuaging her husband's wrath, she sent her children to

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, xi. 12.

meet him: she solicited the aid of a Vestal Virgin to implore the Pontifex Maximus on her behalf, and finally she set out herself to meet the approaching Emperor. "Mounted on a cart used to remove garden refuse, she proceeded along the road to Ostia —not pitied, so overpoweringly hideous were her crimes, by a single soul."[1] But all her efforts were in vain. If he had seen her, the uxorious Claudius might have forgiven her; but the freedmen took care that she should not approach him. Almost in despair Messalina withdrew again to the gardens of Lucullus, which had come into her hands by cruel injustice, and were now, by the irony of fate, to be the scene of her punishment. In the palace the Emperor was inquiring for her, and had given orders for her to be summoned to his presence on the following day. The well-known weakness of Claudius alarmed the freedman Narcissus, and he determined that the meeting should not take place. Hurrying to the centurions and tribune of the guard, he told them that the Emperor had ordered Messalina's execution. Evodus and the tribune then hastened to the gardens of Lucullus. "They found Messalina prostrate on the ground, while by her side sat her mother, Lepida, who, though estranged from her daughter in prosperity, had been moved to pity by her final calamities. 'Do not wait,' she was urging, 'the hand of the assassin: life is over, and there is nothing to be had now but an honourable death.' But Messalina's spirit had been broken by sensuality: there was no honour in her. The unavailing tears and lamentations still went on. The hurrying feet of the assassins were without, the doors burst in; the tribune stood by in silence, while the freedman, after the manner of his kind,

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, xi. 32.

heaped insults on the fallen Empress. Then for the first time she looked her doom in the face, and took the dagger in her hand: but, while she drew it to and fro across her neck and breast, all to no purpose for she was all a-tremble, the tribune transfixed her with his sword."[1]

If Messalina was the type of a woman who lived for sensual indulgence, the younger Agrippina, her successor on the throne, was the type of those whose sensuality was merely an instrument to serve their ambition. Criminal and vicious she undoubtedly was; but her crimes and vices were perpetrated in the lust not of pleasure, but of empire. Upon the death of Messalina, the Court was plunged into profound agitation over the choice of her successor. Aelia Paetina, a divorced wife of the Emperor, and Lollia Paulina, the divorced wife of his predecessor, were each supported by a strong party. The personal charms of Agrippina, however, with which she was not sparing, soon beat all her rivals out of the field and subdued the easy-going and pleasure-loving Emperor. But Agrippina's object was not merely power over the Emperor, but power in the Empire; and to obtain this she must be the Emperor's wife. It was nothing to her that she was the Emperor's niece, and that the Romans regarded such a union with abhorrence. Claudius was easily persuaded to pass a decree legalizing such marriages; and before long the marriage was publicly solemnized. Thenceforth the efforts of Agrippina were directed towards securing for herself as much power as possible, and for her son the succession to the throne. With the latter object she had already committed one cruel crime. Octavia, the daughter of Claudius, was betrothed to Lucius

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, xi. 37, 38.

AGRIPPINA MINOR

PROFILE OF THE HEAD OF THE STATUE IN THE LATERAN, FOUND AT CERVETRI

Silanus, and was shortly to be married; but Agrippina determined that Octavia should marry no one but her son, Nero. Without hesitation she caused an atrocious charge to be trumped up against Silanus, which ended in his utter ruin and expulsion from the Senate, and at last drove him to commit suicide upon the very day which saw the nuptials of Claudius and Agrippina. The Empress now turned her attention to Britannicus. This unfortunate young prince, who was a son of Claudius by Messalina, had a strong claim to the succession which Agrippina could not ignore. By artful insinuations and unscrupulous falsehoods she sowed misunderstanding and suspicion between father and son, and by false accusations secured the condemnation and execution of the boy's grandmother, Domitia Lepida. Of these two women Tacitus says: "In beauty, age, and wealth there was not much difference between them. Both were immodest, infamous, and violent. They were rivals in their vices no less than in the gifts which fortune had given them."[1] Britannicus, however, still had a strong party at Court, and the Emperor's unstable character was always ground for uneasiness; so Agrippina, seeing what danger lay in the lapse of time, determined upon the culminating crime of hastening the end of Claudius. There lived in Rome at the time a woman, Locusta by name, who was notorious for her skill in poisons, and had for long been regarded, as Tacitus says, as "one of the instruments of monarchy."[2] From this woman Agrippina obtained a subtle drug which she administered to Claudius in a dish of mushrooms. The poison, however, failed to do its work properly. In terror Agrippina summoned her physician, Xenophon, who without

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, xii. 64. [2] *Ibid.*, 66.

more ado passed a poisoned feather into the Emperor's throat upon the pretext of giving him relief.[1]

By this dastardly crime Agrippina attained the summit of her ambition. Her son, Nero, was proclaimed Emperor; and, as he was a young man more devoted to pleasure than to the cares of government, he left the exercise of authority in the hands of his mother and of his two tutors, Seneca and Burrus. For a few years Agrippina tasted the delights which she had schemed so unscrupulously to attain; but Nemesis was close at hand. Nero, who at first was devoted to his mother, soon began to find her overbearing temper irksome, and became restive beneath her authority. As soon as she noticed this, Agrippina attempted a counter-stroke by espousing the cause of Britannicus, whom she had formerly left no stone unturned to disinherit. But Nero, by the services of Locusta, soon put an end to this intrigue by poisoning the young prince. Nothing daunted, Agrippina now espoused the cause of Octavia, whom Nero had already begun to treat with indifference and dislike. This action so alarmed Nero that he deprived his mother of all her pomp and dismissed her from the palace. For some years Agrippina in a semi-private condition ate the bitter fruit of her schemings. Meanwhile Nero had fallen passionately in love with a beautiful, dissolute, and ambitious woman, Poppaea Sabina, the object of whose intrigues was to bring about the divorce of Octavia by the Emperor, and to take her place. To her undoing, Agrippina once more took her daughter-in-law's part, and used every effort to prevent the marriage being dissolved. Poppaea by every art added to the furious resentment of the Emperor, and at last induced him to plot his mother's assassination.

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, xii. 67.

During a festival of Minerva, Nero invited his mother to his villa at Baiae to a banquet. When the feast was over, Agrippina let herself be persuaded to be taken back by water. The boat which was to convey her had been specially constructed for the purpose with an arrangement by which the roof of the poop could be made to fall in and crush those beneath. When the right moment arrived, the signal was given, but the mechanism did not work completely, so that Agrippina and her maid escaped unhurt. Immediately orders were given to upset the boat; but as all the crew were not privy to the plot, the boat overturned with much less violence than was intended, and Agrippina and her maid slipped gently into the water. The maid, thinking to save herself, called out that she was the Empress, and was immediately beaten to death with oars; while Agrippina, now realizing the nature of the plot, preserved a cautious silence, and swimming to shore, returned to her villa on the Lucrine Lake. The news of the failure of this enterprise threw Nero into a paroxysm of terror. He sought the advice of Seneca and Burrus, but they would have nothing to do with the crime. At length Anicetus consented to finish the work. With two companions he hurried to the Lucrine Villa, where they found the unhappy Agrippina stretched upon a couch, deserted by all save one attendant. And there, beneath a rain of blows, expired this ill-fated woman, at the instigation of the son for whose interest she had committed so many crimes.[1]

Yet another type of these reckless women of the Empire was that Poppaea Sabina, whose influence over Nero had decided the fate of Agrippina. "Poppaea," observes Tacitus, "possessed everything but a sense

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, xiii. 1–xiv. 8.

of decency. Her mother, the most beautiful woman of her day, had bequeathed to her both fame and beauty. Her wealth was sufficient to support so distinguished a lineage. Her conversation was charming; her intelligence by no means despicable. She made a show of modesty while she practised prurience. It was rarely she went abroad, and even then she kept a part of her face veiled so as not to glut the eye of the beholder, or perhaps because this style became her. She was ever prodigal of her good name, was never a slave to her own or another's desires, and was always ready to bestow her favours where a prospect of advantage presented itself."[1] By a deft exercise of her charms she obtained a complete mastery over Nero. As we have seen, she compassed the destruction of Agrippina, and it was not long before she induced the Emperor to divorce and banish the innocent Octavia, whom ultimately she hounded to death. The summit of her ambition was reached; she became the Empress of Rome. Unlike Messalina, she interfered in the government; and unlike Agrippina, she looked upon the Empire as a toy for her aggrandisement and amusement. The story of her revels and debaucheries, which were enacted without shame before the populace of Rome, is almost past belief: her reckless extravagance depleted the Imperial exchequer, and her hopeless irresponsibility went far to reduce the Roman Empire to the lamentable condition in which it stood during the closing years of Nero's reign. Her end was tragic. She had borne Nero a daughter who had died in infancy, and two years later was expecting another child. In a fit of rage Nero kicked her with his heavy boot and brought on a miscarriage which resulted in her death.[2]

[1] Tacitus, *Annales*, xiii. 45. [2] *Ibid.*, xvi. 6.

But it must not be supposed that all the women of imperial Rome were moulded in these types. On the contrary, there were many, perhaps more than we imagine, who led virtuous and noble lives amid this sea of corruption; and no review of Roman women, however brief, would be complete without a reference to them. One of these great women was Octavia, the beautiful sister of Augustus Caesar. It was her misfortune to become a pawn in the game between Caesar and Antonius. She had been first married to the young Marcellus, whose early promise was blighted by an untimely death; but before her widowhood had lasted for long, a breach occurred in the relations between her brother and Antonius. A meeting between the two triumvirs resulted in fresh terms being arranged, and it seemed good to all parties that the new treaty should be sealed by a personal relationship between the two contracting parties. "Everybody," says Plutarch, "was proposing the marriage of Octavia and Antonius in the hope that Octavia, who besides great beauty possessed dignity of character and good sense, if she were united to Antonius and were beloved by him, as it was reasonable to suppose that such a woman must be, would acquire such an influence over him as would be salutary to the state."[1] It was not long before the hopes entertained of this marriage were put to the test. Antonius and Caesar once more came almost to an open rupture; and it was only the intervention of Octavia which saved the crisis. "She met Caesar on the way, and after gaining over his friends Agrippa and Maecenas, she prayed him with much urgency and much entreaty not to convert her from being the happiest, to be the most wretched, of women. For now, she said, all men's

[1] Plutarch, *Antonius*, 31.

eyes were turned upon her, who was the wife of one Imperator and the sister of another; 'but if the worst should prevail,' she continued, 'and there should be war, it is uncertain which of you must be the victor and which the vanquished; but I shall be miserable in either case.'"[1] The infidelity of Antonius, however, brought out her highest virtues. After the last agreement between him and Caesar, Antonius, leaving his wife at Athens, returned to the East, where he fell once more into the toils of Cleopatra, with whom he dallied instead of prosecuting vigorously the campaign he had on hand. The news of his behaviour soon reached Octavia's ears, and she determined to go out to him. But "on reaching Athens she received letters from Antonius, in which he told her to stop there, and informed her of his intended expedition. Though Octavia was annoyed and saw that this was only a pretext, she wrote to him to ask to what place he would have the things sent which she was bringing to him—for she was taking a great quantity of clothing for the army, many beasts, and money and presents for his officers and friends, besides two thousand picked soldiers equipped as praetorian cohorts and magnificently accoutred."[2] The knowledge of her generosity affected Antonius, but Cleopatra was quick to see the change, and put forth every art to keep her lover. In this she was successful, and the relations between them became more notorious than ever. Octavia, meanwhile, had returned to Rome, and Caesar was so incensed that he wished her to live in his house. "Octavia refused to leave her husband's house, and she advised her brother, if he had not for other reasons determined to go to war with Antonius, to let her affairs alone, for it was not seemly that it should

[1] Plutarch, *Antonius*, 35. [2] *Ibid.*, 53.

be said that of the greatest Imperators one through love for a woman, and the other through jealousy, brought the Romans to civil war. Such were her words, and she confirmed her words by her deeds; for she lived in her husband's house just as if he were at home, and she took care of the children, both her own and those of Fulvia, in an honourable and liberal way; she also received the friends of Antonius who were sent to Rome to get offices or on business, and assisted them in obtaining from Caesar what they wanted."[1] But her loyalty and devotion were lost upon Antonius. He had now sunk hopelessly beneath the influence of Cleopatra, who at last persuaded him to affront his wife openly. "Antonius sent persons to Rome to eject Octavia from his house; and it is said that, when she left it, she took all the children of Antonius with her, and that she wept and lamented that she too would be considered one of the causes of the war. And the Romans pitied not her, but they pitied Antonius, and those chiefly who had seen Cleopatra, a woman who had not the advantage over Octavia either in beauty or in youth."[2]

Arria was the wife of Caecina Paetus. "Paetus was sick, and so was her son"—it is Pliny who is writing to a friend—"both of them like to die. The son, a lad of great beauty and dutiful towards both his parents, was beloved by them for other reasons than merely because he was their son. He died: and Arria made the arrangements for his funeral and carried out his obsequies in such a manner that her husband was kept in ignorance of it. Whenever she entered his room, she used to pretend that the boy was still alive and more comfortable. Time and again Paetus asked her how the boy was doing, and

[1] Plutarch, *Antonius*, 54. [2] *Ibid.*, 57.

she used to reply: 'He is resting nicely and takes food freely.' And then when the tears, so long restrained, overwhelmed her and gushed forth, she would hurry from the room to surrender herself at last to her grief. And when her feelings were relieved, she would return with dry eyes and serene countenance, as though she had left her bereavement outside the door."[1] The last scene of her life disclosed the same magnificent devotion. Her husband had been ordered by Claudius to put himself to death, and hesitated to do so. But Arria showed him how to die.

> The sword she drew from out her heart,
> And to her husband passed it o'er:
> Ah, Paetus! my wound has no smart;
> The thought of thine doth hurt me more![2]

Few men in Rome were in closer touch with the degenerate morals of his day than the philosopher Seneca; and it is reasonable to believe that his wife, Paulina, was well acquainted with the lurid scenes of the Imperial Court. Yet nothing can surpass the affection which subsisted between the two. In one of his letters[3] Seneca relates the tenderness with which his wife nursed him when he was ill, and adds, "for what is more pleasant than to be so precious to your wife that for that very reason you become more precious to yourself?" Paulina's devotion, like Arria's, was true to the death; and when Seneca opened his veins at the command of Nero, Paulina made a desperate endeavour to die with him, and was only prevented from doing so by the intervention of the Emperor's officers.

Other instances of conjugal loyalty and happiness,

[1] Pliny, *Epistolae*, iii. 16. [2] Martialis, i. 14.
[3] *Epistolae*, 104.

such as Agricola and his wife, present themselves to the mind; but we must be content with the curious story of Eponia, or Empone, as Plutarch calls her. "I want to relate," says that author, "an incident which occurred in my own time during the reign of the Emperor Vespasian. Julius, who instigated the revolt in Gaul, had, as was natural, a great number of confederates, and among the rest a young man called Sabinus, who was of noble birth and highly distinguished alike in wealth and fame. Their attempt upon the Government failed, and, expecting to be punished, some of the rebels committed suicide, while others fled and were captured. Sabinus might easily have got away and taken refuge among the native tribes: but he had married one of the best of women—Empone, the Romans call her, though in Greek one might address her as Heroïs—and he could neither leave her behind nor take her with him. Now he had at his country place an underground treasure-chamber, the existence of which was known only to two of his freedmen. So, giving out that he intended to poison himself, he dismissed all his other servants, and taking with him the two faithful freedmen he descended into the vault. He then sent one of the freedmen, Martalius, to his wife to tell her 'that her husband had died of poison and that the villa was to be his pyre': for he wished to make sure that his wife would be really affected by his reported death. And it was so. With cries and groans she flung herself down where she stood and remained for three days and nights without tasting food. Sabinus, when he heard this, was alarmed lest she should destroy herself right out, and bade Martalius tell her privately that he was still alive and in hiding. He begged her to keep up the appearance of mourning

for a little while, but not to let her acting become too realistic to herself. His wife acted up to the supposed tragedy of her life with great *verve*. When she wished to see him she used to come and return again under cover of night. Thus she continued to live in darkness with her husband for a little less than seven continuous months. During this time, having got a disguise for Sabinus and shaved his head, she took him into Rome with her during the exhibition of some games. However, she effected nothing, and returned once more. For the greater part of the time she lived with Sabinus underground, but from time to time she used to go into Rome to visit her female friends and relations. But the most incredible thing of all was that, though she bathed with the women, she managed to keep from them the knowledge that she was pregnant. The drug which women use in anointing the hair so as to make it golden or auburn, contains a fatty substance which is capable of forming flesh or of making the flesh flabby in such a way as to give the body an inflated appearance. And it was by a liberal use of this compound applied all over her body, that Empone managed to conceal her condition. When her hour was come, she went down to her husband, and, like a lioness in her den, endured all alone the pangs of birth and suckled in secrecy the twin cubs she had brought forth. Her end was by the executioner's axe, and Vespasian, who ordered it, paid the penalty for her murder, in that ere long his entire race was destroyed root and branch. His reign showed no more ruthless deed. Yet the pity of those who beheld her was quelled by the daring spirit and haughty words which beyond all else provoked the anger of Vespasian; for she refused to be reconciled with him as the price of life,

exclaiming: 'To have lived in darkness in the bowels of the earth is sweeter than to see such a man as you upon the throne.'"[1]

Amid all the corruption, then, of Imperial Rome, there were some, possibly many, women who lived lives of self-sacrifice, loyalty, and devotion. And though few of them appear upon the page of history, the Western world possibly owes to them an unacknowledged debt of gratitude, in so far as it was they, or their like, who received and cherished the first seeds of Western Christianity.

[1] Plutarch, *Amatorius Liber*, chap. xxv.; the tale is told more briefly by Dion lxvi. 3.

BYZANTINE WOMEN AND MEDIÆVAL WOMEN

IN the West the women who set their mark on history have not, for the most part, been those enervated by the surroundings of a court. In the East the reverse is the rule. The Byzantine woman stood where the restrictions of the Orient clashed with the freedom accorded to her sex in the Occident. The seclusion of women in the palace at Constantinople was almost as complete as in the harem.[1] The contrasts of existence were more violent on the shores of the Bosphorus than in degenerated Rome with its pampered, lazy freemen.[2] Ladies of high rank in the Eastern Empire were practically chattels of their parents and their husbands, or were doomed to vows of celibacy for purposes of State.[3] The woman who

[1] "I saw a number of women who up to then had never for one hour set foot out of the *Gynaeceum* and who now boldly showed themselves to the crowd, uttering shrill cries, bursting into sobs and lamentable wailings" (Psellus, *ἐκατοντατηρὶς Βυζαντινὴς ἱστορίας*; ed. Sulhas).

[2] "Prostrated face to the ground, old men grown white in deliberations of the senate, generals covered with wounds and laurels, ministers, magistrates, all adored the crowned minion who some months before had perhaps been rendering the vilest ministrations lost in the domestic infinity of the Palace. How such official manners must have degraded the soul and vilified the character, whilst horribly humiliating it!" (*L'Epopée Byzantine*, by G. Schlumberger, chap. viii., p. 162.)

[3] "Consign them to the cloister as is wont.
Can a widow's tears, a passionate girl's defiance
Outweigh wife's love, Rome's* peace, the will of God?"
Nicephorus, by F. Harrison, Act I., Sc. iii.

* Rome is used for Constantinople.

stood beside the throne, striving to influence the weak or suspicious Emperor, had to struggle through the tangled meshes of intrigue and crime, with the possibility of banishment or violent death ever hovering like a skeleton at her feast. Sometimes this woman, who had to possess transcendent ability, was of royal birth. The alternative nearly always was that of coming from the profligate class. In either case ambition had to curb lust, while strategy forced her to countenance those she hated until either they or she were overthrown by one of those sudden palace insurrections which form grim milestones on the road of Byzantine history. The remainder of the Byzantine women were only the fecund background to a teeming and tumultuous male population.

Some phases of Byzantine *Augusta* illustrate an epoch as difficult from the point of historic accuracy as from that of costume.[1] The fierce acts of those energetic women seem to lay bare the bed-rock of human passion in more violent convulsions than even in the *Niebelungen*, whilst the relish for human suffering surpasses that displayed by the Jesuitical Inquisition.

Upon Theodosius II succeeding Arcadius in 408 at the age of seven, the Romans had so long been accustomed to the authority of a monarch that the first, even among the females of the Imperial family, who displayed any courage or capacity was permitted to ascend the vacant throne.[2] His sister Pulcheria received at sixteen the title of Augusta. From a child her one object seems to have been to teach her

[1] "Asiatic decoration and Oriental taste gradually increased, obliterating all traces of ancient Roman classical attire, a period of uncertainty, conjecture and contradiction" (Planché, *Cyclopaedia of Costume*, vol. ii., p. 29).

[2] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. viii.

brother, just as Matilda of Saxony's sole aim was to abnegate her own interests for those of the papacy. Pulcheria was no soft weakling; virile of temperament, she herself instructed her brother in every department not only of statecraft, but of deportment—only a prince, unfortunate enough to be born in the purple, must remain a stranger to the voice of truth.[1] That no natural instincts of womanhood should distract her, Pulcheria not only took a vow of perpetual virginity in the presence of the clergy and people, but compelled her sisters to do likewise; and inscribed a testimony of this on a jewelled and gilded marble tablet which she presented to the Basilica of Constantinople.[2]

The palace became converted into a nunnery. In all the antechambers courtiers disputed doctrines and maids-in-waiting sang psalms, as was the case at the Louvre when the Huguenots held sway; yet the veniality and corruption of the court are depicted in the vilest hues.[3] Tartuffe remains Molière's greatest creation because he was of all time and of every nation. The virgin queens led a life of harsh austerity, and from his own apartments Theodosius came daily to join in their prayers at sunrise. No Cardinal minister to a Louis was ever more vigilant in watching temporal affairs than Pulcheria. It was she who had the man's courage and the spirit of the statesman. Wan with fasting, she would rise from her knees to maintain the policy that preserved profound peace, and all the while she flattered the vanity of her brother by openly ascribing all success to his genius.

[1] Gibbon, Milman ed., vol. iv., p. 163.

[2] *Deux Imperatrices de L'Orient*, by Amadée Thierry. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, vol. xcv.; Oct. 1871.

[3] Eunapius, in Fragments, quoted by Niebuhr.

What she put before him he signed without reading, and thereby hangs one anecdote. Passionately fond of a certain woman, Theodosius one day sent for her and she did not appear. On his brow clouding, Pulcheria said, "She will come only if I permit," and she showed him an edict bearing his own signature making the woman his sister's slave. She would brook no rival in her statecraft, permit him nothing to draw away his attention from duly carrying out her policy.

For this cipher on the throne Pulcheria chose as wife Athenais, daughter of the sophist Leontius, and to her brother, then twenty, she described his bride, aged twenty-eight, as having "large eyes, a well-proportioned nose, a fair complexion, golden locks, a slender person, a graceful demeanour, an understanding improved by study and a virtue tried by distress." When this celebrated maiden changed her faith as easily as she changed her robe, Pulcheria bestowed on her the name of Eudocia. At her elevation her brothers were filled with apprehension, for they had conspired to cheat her out of her inheritance; but she sent for them and said, "Why should I bear malice, for in refusing me a small heritage you gave me a crown. Besides, you were predestined to it by my horoscope," which proves her superstition was unchecked by her conversion; but superstition was rife among Byzantine Christians. Whilst her sisters-in-law prayed, Eudocia wrote a metrical version of the first eight books of the Bible and a poem on the loves of S. Cyprian and S. Justina, who were martyrs in Nicomedia in the time of Diocletian.[1] At length she

[1] S. Cyprian was a converted magician who burnt his books; S. Justina "defeated and put to flight the devils with the sign of the cross" (Photius). She was scourged, he torn with iron hooks, and both were beheaded by the river Gallus (S. Gregory Nazianzen).

aspired to govern instead of Pulcheria, and then the palace rang with feminine discord; but Theodosius had been too long under the thrall of his sister to stand up for his wife. Eudocia made a stately and munificent pilgrimage to Jerusalem,[1] fled there a second time, and after some sanguinary reprisals, was disgraced, and eked out the remaining sixteen years of her life in exile and devotion.

For Pulcheria was reserved the honour of being the first to be proclaimed Empress on the death of her brother. Always astute and fearing popular prejudice would revolt against the accident of her sex, she bestowed her hand on an elderly senator Marcian, who respected her vow and her rank. Subsequently the chief human interest in connection with this austere stateswoman is the fact that she entertained for some fourteen years the hapless and passionate Honoria, sister of Valentinian, who had been restored to the throne of the West by Placidia. Impatient of the long and hopeless celibacy forced on her by statecraft, this impetuous girl offered to become the wife of Attila, the terrific king of the Huns, whose language she did not know, whose figure exhibited the deformity of a modern Kalmuck,[2] who had a habit of rolling his eyes as though enjoying the terror he inspired, and who multiplied the number of his wives. When her indecent advances were discovered she was sent back to Italy, and after she had been compelled to go through the ceremony of marriage with some low-born and ignoble husband, she was flung into a prison from which death alone released her—a fate possibly

[1] It surpassed that of Helena, for Eudocia's gifts are estimated at £800,000 sterling by L'Abbé Guenée.

[2] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. iii., p. 418.

more merciful than falling the prey of some barbarians.[1]

History shows no parallel, not even that of Catherine of Russia, to the adaptability of Theodora to her great surroundings after her astounding elevation. She was the second daughter of one Acacius, a Cyprian, who was bear-keeper of the amphitheatre at Constantinople. In the dressing-room of her elder sister, Comito,[2] she prematurely learnt the elements of depravity, and at an early age herself became celebrated as a pantomimist, her great trick being to puff out her cheeks and smack them, at which the whole theatre of Constantinople resounded with laughter and applause.[3] Being prohibited by law from appearing stark naked, she would come forward with only a girdle round her loins, and, lying exposed to the public gaze, would permit trained geese to pick seeds off her body.[4] Her beauty was "such that the word and the arts of men are impotent to represent it."[5] She was rather small and possessed extreme grace. Her tint was pale, her eyes full of vivacity, expression, and flame. Dark hair surmounted a rather attenuated oval face, with a long, straight, thin nose; whilst her eyebrows joined and "seemed to eat her face."[6] Of her moral character, rendered even more degraded by its unblushing avarice, Gibbon has one significant phrase, "Her charity was universal."[7] For a while

[1] Here is an illustration of barbaric amusement. Raukhing, duke of Austrasia, forced the slaves, who lighted him at supper with resinous torches, to extinguish them by pressing them between their naked thighs. (H. Houssaye, *Aspasia, Cleopatra, Theodora*, p. 224.)

[2] Afterwards married to Sittas, duke of Armenia.

[3] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. iv., p. 212, drawing on Procopius.

[4] Procopius, *Secret History of Court of Justinian.*

[5] *Aed*, p. 206. [6] C. Diehl, *Justinien* (1901).

[7] *Decline and Fall*, vol. iv. p. 213. "Theodora surpassed the Crispa of Ausonius."

she quitted Constantinople with the Tyrian Ecebolus on his being made governor of Pentapolis, and when he grew weary of her she found herself reduced to extreme distress, being compelled to trail her miseries through many cities.[1]

At last, returning to Constantinople, this courtesan attracted the attention of Justinian, nephew and heir of Justin, the Elder, who placed the diadem on his head in 527, when he himself was suffering from an incurable wound in the thigh.[2] Justinian was a man accustomed to a life of simplicity, for he never drank wine and ate little, sometimes going two days without food and being practically a vegetarian. Always master of himself until Theodora crossed his path, he became absorbed in her with the fierce passion of a man trained to chastity and self-repression. To her, skilled in every amorous art, it could not have been difficult to enthral a man given to reflection, whose contemplation must be rudely diverted by this fascinating siren. It was as though a monk had yielded to the temptation of one of the diabolic visitors to his cell. Yet the strange fact remains that it was his union with Theodora which absolutely supported Justinian. He never thwarted her, always loved her, let her use and abuse power as she pleased; but so long as she lived it was his golden age, and only after her death can a historian detect abatement in the triumph. It has been said that with him the Roman Empire finished. He was not an autocrat, but a Cæsar.[3]

Possibly owing to religious scruples, Justinian, against the laws of Rome which prohibited the marriage of a senator with any woman connected with the

[1] "So that by will of the devil no part of the world should be ignorant of the impudicity of Theodora." (Procopius.)

[2] *Chronicle* of Marcellinus.

[3] Houssaye, *Aspasia, Cleopatra, Theodora*, p. 233.

theatrical profession, determined to make Theodora his wife. His aunt, the Empress Lupicina, stoutly objected, but on her death Justinian was still firm, and the Patriarch of Constantinople placed the diadem on the head of Theodora as well as on that of her husband.[1] In the very hippodrome where she had mimed for the multitude she received the homage of court, clergy, captive monarchs, and populace[2]; while over their bowed heads she traced in the air the sign of the cross.[3]

No Western counterpart exists to the wealth of the Imperial Palace, which, within its fortified enclosure, contained every glory devised by man. Its gardens, its chambers, its treasures, its baths, and its jewels, were all of the most lavish and gorgeous profusion, for Byzantine art had its own original decorative style. Although figures in *relievo* and sculptured ornaments of different descriptions were of frequent occurrence, the impression they made was more picturesque than plastic, and the combination of various precious metals, pearls and variegated gems added to the frequent ornaments in exquisite enamel, proved the delight that was felt in the glowing effects of colour.[4]

Even the marvels on the shores of the Bosphorus were as nothing compared to the resources of the empire, but elevation to their possession was only a small part of what befell Theodora, for Justinian made her his equal and independent colleague, giving over to her full power to do and to undo. This daughter of a keeper of bears could elevate or disgrace a minister, could raise the eunuch Narses by one word to the

[1] Gibbon, vol. iv., p. 214.

[2] "The hippodrome became the forum of Byzantium" (Diehl, p. 442).

[3] Theodora has not been without her apologists, possibly owing to the contrast between her morals before and after her elevation.

[4] *History of Art*, by Lübke, translated by C. Cook, chap. vi., p. 401.

rank of general, and she even made the deacon Vigile pope.

To do her justice, she became from her accession a model of virtue, but the passion which had previously swayed her existence now took the form of cruelty. The secretary Priscus, who tried to struggle against her paramount influence over Justinian, was exiled, imprisoned, and forced to take holy orders, whilst his vast fortune was confiscated. John of Cappadocia, prefect of the pretorium, having shown insolence to her, had to save his life by exile. Her pride, exceeding all bounds, intensified court etiquette, and the highest dignitaries were compelled to prostrate themselves and kiss her feet, whilst sometimes the noblest had to wait days in her ante-rooms for a reception that was merely formal.

An alternative aspect of the glories of the palace is that of its labyrinth of cells and dungeons. So intricate were these that for ten years the imperial patriarch Anthimus lived in them an existence known only to two faithful servants, the world believing him dead.[1] Theodora delighted to see her victims scourged or racked. Theodosius she imprisoned in an underground dungeon, where she kept him fastened to a kind of manger out of which he had to eat, forced by a taut rope always to stand upright. It was said contemptuously that there was no difference between him and a donkey except that he could not bray.[2] Madness ended his sufferings. This callous woman kept Buzes twenty-eight months in a pit, the darkness of which permanently affected his sight. It was also noteworthy that her vengeance was usually extended to the children of her victims.

[1] John of Ephesus, *Commentaries.*

[2] Procopius, *Secret History of Court of Justinian.*

Theodora, harsh to others, was indulgent to herself. She slept late into the day to give herself a good complexion, took frequent baths, possessed nearly fifty wigs, whilst she was fond of exquisite food, and took almost theatrical pleasure in the sensation she could create. In the famous mosaic of St. Vital's at Ravenna, she presents a striking figure clad in a long cloak with figures embroidered on its broad border. Below is revealed a dress richly decorative, while from her bejewelled crown fall ropes of precious stones, and the shoulders of her cape are also studded with them.

So great was the influence she exerted over Justinian that a superstitious age did not hesitate to ascribe it to witchcraft.[1] Her courage unquestionably sustained him during the Nika riots, when he was preparing to flee, on which occasion she displayed a coolness and an intrepidity which compel our admiration. "If flight were the only means of safety, yet I should disdain to fly," she told him. "Death is the condition of our birth, but they who have reigned should never survive the loss of dignity and dominion. I implore Heaven that I may never be seen, not a day, without my diadem and purple; that I may no longer behold the light when I cease to be saluted with the name of queen. If you resolve, O Caesar! to fly, you have treasures; behold the sea, you have ships; but tremble lest the desire of life should expose you to wretched exile and ignominious death. For my own part I adhere to the maxim of antiquity, that the throne is a glorious sepulchre."

The critical situation from which her fortitude ex-

[1] Debidour, in his *Theodora*, cites a diatribe by Baronius, who calls her "a detestable creature, a second Eve, too docile to the serpent, a new Delilah, another Herodias, athirst for the blood of the saints, a citizeness of Hell, protected by demons, moved by the spirit of Satan, instigated by the fury of the devil to break the peace bought by the blood of confessors and of martyrs."

tricated him arose out of a quarrel between the factions of the blue and the green in the circus, that hippodrome to which ladies were not admitted, but which she and her attendants could comfortably[1] watch from the gallery of the neighbouring church. But like so many women whose early career was vicious, Theodora became devout with advancing years, and professed the heresy of monophysism, the single nature in Jesus Christ. She loved to be depicted as benefactress, and was prodigally generous to churches and orphanages.[2] Her piety was agreeable to Justinian, who himself composed hymns, and whose Code forms the true foundation of monastical institutions.[3] Harsh to men, Theodora was kindly to her own sex. She established a retreat for five hundred women collected from the streets of Constantinople,[4] and to her influence is ascribed the greater consideration given to women in the enlightened Code of her husband. Her death from cancer left him deploring an irreparable loss after an union of twenty-four years. Two years later she is celebrated as St. Theodora.[5] Comment seems superfluous.

Four centuries later a beautiful form flits across the congested stage of Byzantine anarchy, when the barbarian and the Mussulman were carving slices out of the once peaceful empire. No contrast can be more dramatic than that between the influence and

[1] Between the chariot races, one of the sensations was a wonderful performing dog, yellow of hue and blind of one eye. Among other accomplishments he could return to their respective owners rings mixed up in a vase, and out of a group of people was able to pick out the avaricious and the vicious. It was believed he possessed the prophetic spirit of Python (Mal., p. 453).

[2] Paul Silent, *Description of Saint Sophia*, pp. 796–800.

[3] W. Nissin, *Die Regelung des Klosterwesen im Rhomaetreiche.*

[4] Some threw themselves headlong into the sea in despair at their perpetual confinement.

[5] By Paul Silentarius, *Proem*, vv. 58–62.

fall of Theophano, a woman dismissed by historians all too briefly, for she is one of the subtle, elusive figures that disturb, and whose form our eyes wonderingly follow into the shadows. She was regnant Empress of the East, regent for her two sons. Already she was suspected of having instigated her weak husband, Romanus II, to poison his father, Constantine, the porphyrogenite,[1] and tradition describes her, like another Eleanor, bearing, according to the legend, a poisoned cup not to a rival Rosamund, but to her spouse. She believed the popular hero, Nicephorus Phocas, regarded as saint and hero, to be the safeguard of her sons. To him, deformed in person, ascetic at least outwardly and altogether gross, this lovely but unscrupulous woman made ardent love, only to find her passion soon veer towards John Zimisces.[2] She led her lover to the bedside of the second husband she had doomed to death at the hand of the man she destined as his successor. But the venerable patriarch Polyeucte stopped him on the threshold of St. Sophia when he came to be crowned:

"If thou wishest really to reign over this immense empire, thou must before all things sacrifice the infamous wife who has steeled thine arm. Thrust Theophano from thy couch, from her palace, from her capital, or thou shalt not reign."[3]

The lover whom the Empress believed united to her by the bond of their crime, made no protest. On the spot he banished her to a cold cell in one of the gloomy convents of the Isles of Princes[4] whence her eyes could rest on the palace and gardens she had

[1] i.e. born in the purple. In Greek, porphyry and purple are the same word.

[2] Zimisces is an Armenian word indicative of short stature.

[3] Gustave Schlumberger, *L'Epopée Byzantine*, vol. i. p. 21.

[4] *Ibid.*, *Les Isles des Princes.*

once owned. Thenceforth she makes one fugitive appearance, for having effected her escape she precipitates herself before him only to be banished to Armenian Asia.

Strangest of all is the picture in 1042 of the Empire governed by two sisters, Zoe and Theodora, each hating the other: the one proving over and over again the truth of the Roman maxim that every adulteress is capable of poisoning her husband; the other averse to marriage, dragged from a convent to share the throne with the being most antagonistic to her. History presents few spectacles more disgusting than the *basilissa* Zoe, who had murdered one husband only to replace him by an epileptic fanatic, putting the crown on the head of her adopted child, the son of a mechanic. The only act of Michael V was his base ingratitude to his benefactress; but, after he had been put away, she gave her hand a third time, at the age of sixty, amid the censure of the Church, to the Greek subsequently known as Constantine X.[1] Henceforth Zoe was content to see him stand even at public ceremonies between herself and Sclerena his mistress, who was elevated with the title of Augusta. The decline and fall not only of the Roman Empire, but of woman as personified in her semi-senile profligacy, was now complete.

[1] See the remains of Constantine Pellus, in *Byzantine Texts*, ed. by J. B. Bury. His encyclopædic literary output earned him the title of the Photius of the eleventh century (J. B. Bury's edition of Gibbon, appendix to vol. vii.).

THE MEDIÆVAL WOMAN IN THE CONVENT

IN feudal times the convent served as a refuge from the world, a convenient asylum for spinsterhood, often as a prison for individual women and also as a place of religious retreat. As early as the eleventh century complaints had become general that many convents were the scenes of unseemly behaviour. Indeed, such denunciations were heard in nearly every generation, whilst it must not be forgotten that they were virtually the boarding-houses of their times, as well as the hospitals. Too much can easily be made of these attacks by embittered writers who are special pleaders. The constant reforms of old orders and the establishment of new ones, however, prove the existence of the abuses. Of course the whole conventual system violates nature because, under it, woman fails to fulfil her natural vocation of productiveness; yet at the same time it bore fruit in demonstrating that women have capacity for undertaking co-operatively every department of life, and from the mediæval convent comes down to us the first proof, in Christian times in the west of Europe, that the sex had those educational and intellectual powers which are to-day inherited by women existing under conditions of greater freedom.

How far the legends of the earlier saints are

coloured by heathen civilization and folk-lore[1] is, comparatively, an unexplored field of enormous interest; but it is at least clear that the converted women of barbarous races looked on the convent as a refuge from a coarse world. This may be regarded as the protest of modesty at contemporary violation of decency, and it is lamentable that so much that was beneficial and beautiful should have been so sterile.

Although in earlier times many married women had left their husbands to found and govern convents, by the eleventh century the tenants of these places were either spinsters or widows. The abbess was a governor, a dignitary who, in Saxony, represented the Emperor in his absence, who commanded absolute obedience within the walls of her enclosure, and who often exercised considerable jurisdiction and authority over those residing in the vicinity, whilst in Diet or Parliament she had equal rights of representation with lords temporal. In Anglo-Saxon England, not only did nuns inspire the chronicles on which our historical knowledge of the time is due, but they drafted histories, and one of them, Ealdhelm, wrote a valued treatise. Lioba, at Thanet, composed Latin verse in the eighth century, and over the poems of Hroswitha it behoves us to linger.

She was born about 930 and lived to 1001, her life being spent in the Benedictine abbey of Gandersheim, between Magdeburg and Holzminden. A portrait of her, kneeling to offer her poems to the Emperor, Otho I, depicts a woman of ascetic appearance.[2] She was the female playwright who, on the model of Terence, caused the tragic muse to emerge from the

[1] *Woman under Monasticism* by Lina Eckenstein, Cambridge (1896), p. 477.

[2] Georges de Dubor, "Plays of Hroswitha," in *Fortnightly Review*, lix. 1896.

darkness of the dramatic night of the Middle Ages. She wrote in a fashion eminently suited to contemporary taste, and (so like a nun) delighted to portray the barren beauty of celibacy, whilst chastity was her habitual theme. In her play of *Abraham*, which was actually acted by nuns before prelates and laity, a hermit of the fifth century goes to a house of ill-fame to reclaim his niece, Maria.[1] This is a classic of mediæval dramatism, and shows that it is on the literary side alone that Hroswitha belongs to the classic school. In her hands Christianity is represented by the purity and gentleness of woman, and paganism by what she describes as the vigour of men.[2] How eloquently she can write may be seen from the following extract from her play *Wisdom*, in which Wisdom prays to God to unite her to her three martyred daughters, Faith, Hope and Charity.

> "O Earth! I confide to thy keeping these tender flowers, born of my womb. Carry them tenderly in thy bosom, formed of the self-same elements, until the resurrection day, when they shall again blossom forth, haply with greater glory. And do thou, O Christ, fill their souls the while with celestial splendour, and grant peace and rest to their mortal bodies."

One other passage must not be omitted. This is her invocation to the Virgin, taken from her Nativity of the Immaculate Conception:

> "How best disclose this divine mystery of a Virgin bearing in her womb Him whom the universe can hardly contain? Since formerly, O my Queen,

[1] Hroswitha, *Opera*, edit. Barack Einleitung.

[2] W. H. Hudson, "Herosvitha of Gandersheim," in *English Historical Review*, 1888.

the Eternal Father, author of Nature, gave to Balaam's ass the power of speech, and since by the voice of an angel He gave thee power to conceive without ceasing to be virgin, or losing thy purity, He can still do, if He pleases, what He formerly did, and by loosing my tongue and strengthening my voice, He can give me the power of a sacred poet."

Hroswitha stands as a solitary figure,[1] impressive by her loftiness of thought and by her modesty. Her aspiration for self-control forms the unusual keynote to her works.

Mystical expression reached its most effective feminine development in the thirteenth century, also in Saxony, in the convent of Halfta. There the grave Mechtild, associated with her sister Gertrude, "the herald of love," describes the conversations held by Christ and His mother with her soul. Some are impassioned, others homely, as for example:

"The Lord said: My kitchen is my heart which, like unto a kitchen that is the common room of the house and open alike to servants and masters, is ever open to all and for the benefit of all. The cook in this kitchen is the Holy Ghost, who kindly without intermission provides things in abundance, and by replenishing them makes them abound again. My platters are the hearts of saints and of chosen ones which are filled from the overflow of the sweetness of my divine heart."[2]

There had been an elder Mechtild—known as the *beguine*—whose writings are more varied and are

[1] Kopke, *Die älteste deutsche Dichterin*, 1869.

[2] *Revelationes Gertrudianae ac Mechtildianae*, edit. Oudin, 1875, vol. ii., p. 165. Note the last phrase, hundreds of years prior to the famous cult started by La Bien-Heureuse Marguerite Marie.

characterized by many-sided sympathies. One passionate cry runs :[1]

"The fish in the water do not drown, the birds in the air are not lost,
The gold in the furnace does not vanish but there attains its glow.
God has given to every creature to live according to its desire,
Why then should I resist mine?"

One ripened experience towards the close of her life is : "None knows how firm he stands until he has experienced the promptings of desire ; none how strong he is until hatred has attacked him ; none how good he is before he has attained a happy end."[2] Amid her praise of Dominican friars and her increasing elaboration of simile, it is historically interesting to recall that Mechtild von Hackeborn described Heaven, and Mechtild von Magdeburg depicted Hell in similes strikingly resembling those afterwards used by Dante.[3]

In the twelfth century flourished the Abbess Hildegarde, herself of high birth and a tenth child dedicated to God, who desired, almost in infancy, to establish a hermitage within a convent. But her vocation was more useful, and though she hardly knew her letters and took ten years to dictate her first book,[4] her descriptions of the Divine Light are of intense beauty. "I know what I see, and I know nothing that I do not see" was her own pregnant phrase. It forms part of the human interest of this neglected heroine of the Church that not only was she consulted by the greatest men of the time, but was a practical and

[1] Mechtild, *Offenbarungen oder Das Fleissende Licht der Gottheit*, ed. Gall. Moul, 1869, p. 18.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

[3] Lina Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, Cambridge, 1896, p. 330.

[4] Leon Aubinean, *Epaves*, Paris, 1886, p. 371.

efficient abbess, ruling her convent with exceptional judgment, and being remarkable for the maternal care she displayed for the sisters. The volume compiled at her instigation on natural products in health and disease is a notable effort in mediæval medicine.

There can be no doubt that the tone of the mediæval university was not such as to encourage professed religious women to become engaged in the disputations of the lecture-rooms, where lay the centre of education, and it is from this epoch that the drift of progressive education seems to leave nuns in an intellectual backwater. Their energy expended itself in the eminently suitable work of weaving and embroidery, whilst the skill of several nuns in illumination has been unsurpassed.

It is notable that later reforms, even before the Reformation, were all in the direction of cutting off the abbess from management of outside affairs, originally at the instigation of friars; and there was a marked tendency to urge that the primary duty of a nun was the sanctification of self—a movement which cramped intellectual vitality. In the thirteenth century the author of *Holy Maidenhood* called the nun the free woman, and contrasted her with the wife, who, in his eyes, was the slave. But this liberty, claimed for the denizens of the cloister, was negatived long before the Reformation. By then the abbess had sunk from all political influence to her position of secluded authority, and the nun, when not accused by slanderous aspersion, beat the portals of Heaven with prayer, or passively tried her barren path through life. She was neither a potential force nor a stimulus to progress, so she has been outstripped and left as a derelict of mere terrestrial history.

THE SAINT IN THE MIDDLE AGES

No aspect of the moral history of woman is more tragic, more wasteful, more contrary to the behests of nature, than the craze for maceration. It was not even the co-operative idleness, the leisured peace of the conventual system. Here was one woman after another defacing her own image, rendering herself repulsive, wallowing in orgies of self-imposed and barren suffering; emaciating the body which should have borne children. She was ignorant, useless, without any interest save the culture of her own soul, destitute of natural affection, wasting strength in self-torture and cowering before the temptations evoked by her own brain. Small wonder that by the feudal period most men had abandoned the more arid deserts of austerity, and preferred to impose on hysterical women sufferings they themselves flinched from enduring.

Ever since the first centuries of Christianity women had rushed into austerity, either in expiation of sin or as the antithesis of profligacy. In the desert could be met a naked being begrimed with dirt and by years of exposure to the sun, with white hair floating in the wind. This was the once beautiful St. Mary of Egypt, who for almost fifty years was atoning for her iniquities, while still tortured by the memory of songs she had sung when young.[1] Pelagia, the actress of Alexandria, on being converted, donned male attire, and on the Mount of Olives lived with exceptional piety, her sex being only discovered by her brother monks after her death.[2] Every natural affection was converted by super-sensitive conscience into a potential cause of sin. Some declined to see

[1] *Vitae Patrum*, chap. xix.; *Acta Boll.* Apr. 2.
[2] Tillemont, vol. xii. p. 378.

or speak to their mothers; one walked over the weeping form of his mother, who flung herself on the threshold to prevent him from becoming a monk. Asella, a child aged twelve, refused to look on the face of any man, and owing to the prolonged nature of her prayers her knees were as hard as those of a camel.[1] There were extravagances, as when monks of Palestine bathed with women, "among men desiring to be men, among women women."[2] Still, broadly, the sincerity seems to have been as great as its lack of utility.

Northern fervour proved quite as self-pitiless as Southern fanaticism. The Germans were no sooner converted than they provided saints by the gross. Clotilda wife of Clovis, Bertha wife of Ethelbert, and Theolinda wife of Lothaire, were among the queens who deserted palaces and husbands to preside over convents. Dramatic, indeed, was the change of life by which Louise de la Vallière, mistress of Louis XIV, was at Paris in 1675 admitted of the Carmelite order; but it had scores of examples in these early times, including those of St. Claire of Rimini and Marguerite of Cortona.

By the Middle Ages, every town had not only its convent, but also its candidate for sanctity. She might be an anchoress, or recluse living in a cell near a church,[3] she might be a devout virgin or widow living secluded among her family, or she might be an especial devotee who brought renown to the convent of which she was an inmate. She was as much a local celebrity as the village idiot of to-day. By asceticism, by constant auto-suggestion, and by the physical

[1] St. Jerome, *Epist.* xxiv.
[2] Evagrius, vol. i., p. 21.
[3] Morton, *Ancren Biwle*, edition for Camden Society, 1853.

revolt of an unnaturally curbed body and overwrought brain, she became the victim of hysteria, a visionary, and usually a miracle-worker — though it is but just to say it was often those around who manufactured and extolled the miracles, not the saint herself.

From this barren holocaust of wasted existences, without dwelling on St. Claire, whose spiritual friendship with St. Francis of Assisi sheds such a perfume on the life of the only true Christian since Christ, two saints stand supreme—one as the type of absolute sweetness, the other as the counsellor who altered the tendencies of Europe by taking the Pope back from Avignon to Rome.

The whole world has agreed that St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207–31) represents the spiritual woman in her sweetest aspect. In her was shown the highest form of that misguided struggle between the supposed will of God and the true cry of the flesh, and she, with St. Francis of Assisi, furnished the finest examples of charity and of renunciation of all worldly possessions which were the features of the thirteenth century.[1] From her and her contemporaries come our modern charitable institutions of hospital, almshouse, and infirmary. To-day we love the pretty legend of her that when forbidden to give, and caught in the act, on being asked what was in her apron she answered at a venture "Roses," hoping to hide her offence, and opening it found her words had been proved true. She almost starved, sometimes eating only a dry crust, because of her vow to take nothing which was unlawful. The charity of this sweet *Landgrävin* has been vaunted throughout the world, and it

[1] Lina Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, Cambridge, 1896, p. 285.

is her personal sweetness, her loving abnegation, which make her ineffaceable charm.[1]

When her beloved husband took the cross, and in 1227 left for Barbarossa's crusade, dying of a fever in Italy, Elizabeth's happiness ended. She became the tool of the Franciscan order, notably of Conrad of Marburg, who despitefully used her. Reduced to extreme poverty by the usurpation of her brother-in-law, her privations were compared to those of her Saviour. Reinstated in her rights, she renounced the world,[2] dwelt in a hut by the wayside at Marburg, nursed a leper, suffered everything to be taken from her, and finally died—worn out, almost, by that fictitious malady, a broken heart—at the age of twenty-four. The spirit in which her charity was performed has never been surpassed.

The Roman Catholic Church knows no greater figure than Catherine of Siena, and those who have stood in the humble house of the dyer in which this daughter lived, who have lingered in that cellar which must so often have re-echoed with the sounds of the discipline that she took three times a day for an hour and a half, must have seen a spiritual parallel to the subsequent temporal influence wielded by *le petit caporal* himself. From childhood Catherine acknowledged that God inspired her, and having left Siena

[1] The old chronicle of Dietrich, the Thuringian, in Barnage's *Canisius*, Antwerp, 1725, vol. iv., affords the garrulous foundation for all the later biographies, of which Montalembert's (Paris, seventeenth ed., pub. 1889) is the best known.

[2] A storm of controversy was aroused a few years ago by the picture, now in the Tate Gallery, by P. H. Calderon, R.A., called "The Renunciation of Elizabeth." The allegation of her vows being made as depicted is based on the phrase in Dietrich, Lib. iv., "Omnino se exuit et nudavit," quoted in one of the notes to the third act of Charles Kingsley's "Saint's Tragedy" in his *Poems*. Though no extravagance is beyond possibility —for example, St. Francis of Assisi rolling in the thorns—yet this one is improbable, judging by the recurrent episodes of saint-lore to which it has no mediæval parallel.

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY DISTRIBUTING ALMS IN THE CASTLE OF WARTBURG

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PICTURE BY FR. MÜLLER

by the Gate of Ancano to visit her married sister Bonaventura, she wanted to become a hermit in the wilderness. She longed to be admitted to the third Dominican order—"that militia of Jesus Christ"—of which there were over one hundred uncloistered devotees in the neighbourhood. Once so vigorous that she could carry a horse load up two flights, by asceticism she brought herself to such a pitch that her stomach could not retain meat, and her food was only a little bread and herbs. Planks formed her bed, a log her pillow; and only cleanliness forced her to exchange her sinister hair cloth for an iron chain wound round her body. Even when she went with her mother to the hot baths of Vignone Orcia, she managed to scald herself so severely as to induce a violent illness. Once when covered with self-inflicted wounds, she observed, "These are my flowers." In her cell, preserving stultifying silence, she suffered temptations, became a visionary, and, as a prelude to her public career, was not only invested with the *stigmata*, after suffering mystical death, but was henceforth subject to trances and comatose, or cataleptic, conditions.[1]

From this spiritual education she emerged to effect the spiritual welfare of Italy. She began as she continued, preaching with evangelical simplicity. To the government of the *podestat*, Pietro del Monte, she said, "Lay your foundation on the living stone of Jesus Christ, and mingle prayers with all your public acts." Having inspired the impious young noble Tuldo with repentance, and having blessed him on the scaffold, having nursed those smitten with the plague at Siena, having moved the populace at

[1] The facts, from a religious aspect, are best given in Miss Augusta Drane's *History of Catherine of Siena*, London, two vols., 1883; and the political significance is cleverly sketched by Emile Gebhart, in *Moines et Papes*, Paris, 1896, pp. 63–127.

Florence, this daughter of a dyer confronted the task of altering history by bringing back Pope Gregory XI from Avignon to Rome.

At Avignon—"the strongest and finest built palace in the world"—Miramonde de Mauleon or Enemonde de Boulbon, nieces of different popes, had exerted influence amid singers, actors, cooks, mimics, and troubadours.[1] Of one such, Catherine commented on "the stench of sin which made itself sensible whilst that woman was speaking."[2] Amid them the saint came as a pure moonbeam. In her own words, on another occasion,[3] "Now is the time to pray, for the dawn is appearing, and the sun will soon rise. The aurora is come, and the darkness of mortal sin is being chased away." The tone she adopted to Pope Gregory XI was free, and her letters were charming, almost caressing. She never reasoned, never indulged in the elaborate demonstration then customary; she affirmed and concluded with, "It is God's Will which commands you, holy father." "As vicar of Christ, you should rest in the town especially pertaining to you," and as an interlude she made peace between Florence and the Pope. When she met him at Genoa, midway on his journey to Rome, he hesitated to advance or return, although she had inspired him in their solitary talks, and she therefore fell on her knees crying, "O Eternal Love, if the slowness of thy vicar displease Thee, punish my body which I offer and give Thee; strike it with rods, and destroy it at Thy pleasure." To her the papacy was what it had been to Matilda of Saxony, and on her death-bed she told those around "not to hesitate to die for the Pope and

[1] John Pina in *Vita Div. Cath.*, quoted by Miss Drane.

[2] *Legende Minore*, part ii., chap. iv.

[3] Dialogue to Alexia dictated by Catherine, inciting to worship truth.

the Church." When he entered Rome, she advised him to avoid all military pomp, "only hold the cross in your hand."

She died amid schisms, she will live until the history of mediæval Europe is effaced like that of Nineveh. In her was the sweet motherliness which never had full expression. Here are some phrases in her letters about one Simon of Cortona, a novice: "Bless my son Simon for me, and tell him to open his mouth for some milk which his mother is going to send him, and tell him he must learn to run with the stick of good desires. A son should never be afraid of coming to his mother, and he should come to her especially when he has been hurt. Then his mother opens her arms and takes him to her bosom, and though I admit I am but a bad mother, yet I will always carry him on the bosom of charity." Of the spirit of her penances, this phrase portrays something: "I have not the reverence I was bound to have for such innumerable gifts and graces, so many sweet pains and torments Thou hast been pleased to lay upon this body."

The fervour of her ecstasy is expressed thus (in letter ccxxxvi.), "O Hope, sweet sister of Faith; 'tis thou that with the Key of the Blood dost open the portals of Eternal Life. Thou guardest the city of the soul against the enemy of confusion; thou slackenest not thy steps when the demon would seek to trouble the soul with the thought of her sins, and so to cast her into despair, but generously pressing on in the path of virtue, and putting in the balance the Price of the Blood, thou placest the Crown of Victory on the Brow of Perseverance."

This high-water mark of spiritual enthusiasm differs widely from the almost physically passionate utterances of St. Theresa in later times.

MEDIÆVAL WOMAN OUTSIDE THE CONVENT

THE modern freedom of woman has its first manifestation in the development her sex underwent in the time of feudalism. This development was so great that she, who had for ages been little better than a drudge, now ruled despotically, waxing strong in her very weakness. Her sway rested on no charter, yet the swords of the paladins leapt from their scabbards to sustain it.[1] This freedom had not come from the Jewish dispensation, for under that woman was allowed no will of her own, whilst the Roman censorship revealed the same fact.[2] The Church of Christ had not assisted the sex, for it was the doctrine of the Fathers that concupiscence, or sensual passion, was the original sin of human nature,[3] and the aim of the saint was to cut down by the axe of virginity the wood of marriage.[4] In Constantinople a woman who was not a sovereign, or near to the throne, was of no account.

The origin of the freedom and respect due to woman must be traced to the fierce barbarians who overwhelmed the Roman Empire, and yet it cannot be denied that in the earlier barbaric kingdoms the position of woman was one of subordination, and the individuals either very humble or degraded.

The women among the early German tribes were

[1] "Woman in the Middle Ages"; article in *Blackwood*, November, 1867.

[2] Metellus Numidicus, the censor, avowed that if nature had permitted man to exist without woman, he would have been delivered from a very troublesome companion, matrimony being the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty.

[3] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, chapter on the Position of Woman.

[4] St. Jerome, *Epistles*.

as nomadic as the men, and, whilst sharing their labours, were treated with a respect rare among primitive nations. As health was of the utmost importance, a girl babe was plunged at birth into cold water to see if she would live. She then lay on the floor until the father had been asked if he cared to have a daughter brought up. If not, she was exposed under a tree, with a little honey on her lips, or sent afloat down a river on a shield. Until the age of seven children of both sexes were together, the girl never leaving her mother's side until she married; her education was confined to domestic duties and learning some simple recipes for medicine, whilst her memory was trained to remember the lengthy *saga*.

When she grew up she was remarkably tall,[1] and Tacitus observes that she had a fair skin, ruddy cheeks, bright blue or keen grey eyes, and long fair hair. "Girls in their hair" was equivalent to girls in their teens with us, and any one who cut off a woman's hair was punished by death. It was a great slur on a girl not to be married, and at that ceremony her flowing locks were for the first time bound up. She usually presented her husband with arms, whilst his customary gifts were a yoke of oxen, a steed with all its trappings and weapons. When she became a bride, the woman walked three times round her house, chopped up some wood, built a fire, and made some soup in a kettle.

Her dress left her neck and arms bare, and heavy fines were inflicted on any one who touched those parts. One curious feature was that any woman who bore twins was branded as unchaste, owing to the belief that two offspring at the same time could not be legitimate. She came of a virtuous race, and when

[1] Sidonius Apollinaris, being in Gaul, declared it was impossible "to address verses of six feet to patrons seven feet high."

Marius defeated the Cymbrians the captured women begged to become vestal virgins. On his refusal they cast their children under his horses, and strangled or hanged themselves by their own hair to his chariot poles. An unchaste woman might be mutilated by her husband; if he did not maltreat her, the women of her tribe tore her clothes from her back, and not only beat her, but often buried her alive. It was part of the inherent barbaric respect for the mothers of their race that a woman who committed crime should be punished more severely than a man; but when sinned against, should receive a considerably greater indemnity.

To these women is attributed the introduction of linen for garments, and to them braiding was as paramount an occupation as embroidery was among Arabians.[1] Their influence undoubtedly inspired religious and military enthusiasm, and it may be noted that the bulk of the Teuton saints are before the ninth century, thus showing that barbaric ardour, when coming into contact with Christian doctrine, was early impregnated with its chief manifestations of enthusiasm.

How the women from the North, intermingling with the more accomplished, but more decadent, Romans, strengthened the nations, is a fact to which the whole modern course of history has been a testimony. There were moments when the barbarian and the woman fell asunder. In the sixth century Alboin, king of the Lombards, flushed with pride at installing himself in the palace of Verona, invited his wife, Rosamund, to come to sit at the feast of his warriors[2]—a great insult—and to drink from the cup made out of the skull of

[1] Most of the foregoing is based on an invaluable series of articles by Louise P. Bates, entitled "Woman among early Germans," in *Chatauquan*, vol. xx. p. 724; vol. xxi. pp. 90, 219 and 343.

[2] *L'Italie, Etudes Historiques*, by Alphonse Dantier, 1870, vol. i. p. 233.

her father, whose throat her husband had cut before he outraged his corpse. Rosamund's revenge had in it as much savageness as the actions of her ferocious husband. Having substituted herself for the mistress of another man, she gave the latter his choice either to be denounced to Alboin or to murder him. He accepted the latter alternative, and Rosamund, having abducted the other's weapons, secretly fastened to its scabbard the sword which never quitted the side of her husband. Even then he defended himself valiantly with a stool. Later, Rosamund decided to rid herself of her second husband, Hemilchid, by means of poison, which she presented to him as he emerged from his bath. Suspecting treachery when he had drunk a deep draught, he put his dagger to her throat and forced her to drain the goblet, so that the pair died on the same day. This stern Nemesis recalls the statement in the *Edda*, that Gedruna made Attila eat her two sons before she strangled him.

Such ferocity has quite as much exhibition in the history of the papacy as in that of secular courts, and there is perhaps no parallel to the astounding influence of Marozia, a woman who made and unmade popes at her pleasure. Of her no portrait exists, but it is a fact that, unlike her predecessor Hermengarde,[1] she cultivated no art, and only exercised her influence by more complete seductiveness.[2] Born in 880, she was a daughter of Theodora, who was mistress of several popes, and she herself was mistress of Pope Sergius III, mother of Pope John XI, grandmother

[1] Hermengarde informed king Rudolph that if he did not desist from marching against her in Pavia, she would transform by her magic ring all his servants into traitors. "Berthe, Hermengarde, Marozia, three widows, three terrible women, acquired power by self-abandonment," according to Cantu's terse indictment.

[2] *Les Courtisanes de l'Eglise*, by B. Gastineau, Paris, 1870, vol. i., p. 283.

of John XII,[1] and it is a fact that this mother and daughter controlled the pontificate for over fifty years.

By her radiant beauty she first captivated Spoleto, marquis of Camerino, and when he quarrelled with Pope John X,[2] who was the lover of her sister, another Theodora, Marozia followed him into exile before his speedy assassination. Having then married the Duke of Tuscany, she seized the Pope in the church of St. John Lateran and threw him into prison, where he was found strangled a few days later. She waded through blood until her son Alberic, after the last of her husbands, Hugh, king of Burgundy, had smacked his face for some trifling misdeed, revolted and imprisoned her. Eventually this Jezebel, who never showed mercy or displayed any qualities save lust and avarice, died in a convent.[3] Sismondi has one pregnant phrase about the consulate of Alberic: "The Romans then shook off simultaneously the yoke of the women, of the popes and of the kings."

Of a far higher type was the remarkable Matilda of Tuscany—one of the leading women of her time, and for her, like so many others, the clash of arms had no terrors. At the age of fifteen she girded on her sword and rode with her mother, Beatrix, and her stepfather, Godfrey of Lorraine, at the head of the Tuscan forces, when the Normans threatened to besiege the holy city. On the close of the campaign

[1] He cared only for hunting dogs and horses, the latter being fed on pigeons, nuts, and figs soaked in rare wine. One day as he was celebrating Mass, he was told one of his mares was foaling. He at once left off the service to assist at the birth, and then returned to the altar to finish Mass. The Emperor Otho accused him of incest, homicide, sacrilege, and drinking to the devil (*Les Courtisanes de l'Église*, "Théodora et Marozia," sections 14 and 15).

[2] Sismondi happily observes that he merited the glory of a valiant warrior, for which he was better adapted than for the title of Father of the Faithful.

[3] Gibbon has suggested that to her and her mother may be traceable the curious myth of Pope Joan.

Alinari

MONUMENT TO MATILDA OF TUSCANY IN ST. PETER'S, ROME

it was stipulated she should marry Godfrey the Hunchback, heir to the Duchy, and the ceremony was solemnized at Lucca in 1068, but they separated in a few months. Historians have differed whether she divorced her husband or connived at his being drowned. Anyway he disappeared, and she was left free for her strange relationship with Pope Gregory VII.[1] At the time they first came into close friendship he was sixty, and dominated by the passion for universal monarchy.[2] His ruling project was to fix in the college of cardinals the freedom and independence of papal election, and Matilda, throughout the rest of her life, abased her ambition, her duchy, her own desires, and all else she could control to the glory of the pontificate. Gregory himself always called her "daughter of Peter," and she sat enthroned amid the famous assemblage when the excommunicated Emperor Henry IV, almost naked, shivering in the chill of a January day, grovelled in tears for forgiveness, until the Pope raised his hand and uttered the monosyllable, "Enough!" Matilda is depicted with a long, lank body, and her keen, ferretty face exhibits determination and valour. She wears a conical iron crown, studded with pearls and other jewels, a white veil, and blue dress with wide sleeves edged with gold, revealing under-sleeves of red; her cloak, of the same hue, has a border of gold studded with jewels, and her sleeves are cloth of

[1] "Gregory VII found in Matilda treasures of affection which recuperated the fatigues of his genius. Here was one of those fine friendships with women in which the soul of the great belligerents loves to rest for a moment" (Amédée Renée, quoted by Gastineau, see *Les Courtisanes de l'Eglise*, "La fille de Pierre et Gregoire VII," section 2).

[2] "The Countess Matilda herself was for him a nightmare barren of interest, of whom he made use, but whom he never loved, whom he dazzled and duped as a devotee, but never cherished as a woman" (Petruccelli della Gatina, *Hist. Dipl. des Conclaves*). This is as terse and as subtle a phrase of historical elucidation as can be expected in connection with this enigmatical affair.

gold. In the phrase of the old chronicler, *Sa virilité chrétienne* led her to victory, and even the death of Gregory, who was the sole and one thought of this bellicose woman, bowed her rather than defeated her. She brought Victor III from Mont-Cassine to Rome as Joan of Arc brought King Charles VII to Rheims, and when that Pope was prisoner to the Emperor, she sent her chief councillor, Ardouin, to recall the monarch to his duty.

Matilda stands as a representative woman of feudalism, even though she herself was south of the chief range of that power. To try to give some idea of the position of her sex in feudalism is of more value than to select isolated instances of predominance among the notable ladies of the epoch. For this it is necessary to see how they lived and wherewithal they were occupied. Incidentally, a flood of light is thus let on to the *way* in which they were regarded, and for this the romances often provide as much revelation as more severe historical documents.

The civilization of feudalism radiated from the baron, as from the sovereign, who was feudal lord of his peers. The strength of the castle of the baron was often the chief emblem of his power; hence it is that feudal life is mainly concerned with the castle, and for the most part the lives of the ladies were spent within its walls. By the twelfth century stone had completely superseded wood in its construction. Usually moated, with drawbridges, portcullis, and parapets, within was virtually the population of a village, with the keep towering above, and the chapel often the only other important separate edifice within its enclosure.[1] Whether it be at Ancona, at Rochester, or at Chenonceaux, while the divergences were comparatively

[1] Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire d'Architecture*, vol. iii., p. 80.

small, the desire for protection, the aim at fortification were similar.

The one pacific object of all the inhabitants was to avoid boredom, and whilst, of course, on the women lay the burden of amusing the warriors, existence must often have been dreary when fighting was not the paramount occupation. Hunting was one safety-valve, and it is notable that no dame who was not of gentle birth was allowed to carry a hawk on her wrist. Menagiér of Paris instructs his wife that falconry was to be regarded as specially the province of ladies, the merlin being the bird principally hawked by the sex; and both ecclesiastics and ladies entered chapels carrying their favourite birds.[1] John of Salisbury, an ecclesiastic of the twelfth century, testified to the eagerness with which the ladies followed hawking; and at a later period Marie of Burgundy, wife of the Archduke Maximilian, was thrown from her horse and killed at a hunting-party given by Louis XII. Another feminine sport was ferreting,[2] whilst in an illuminated manuscript of the fifteenth century there is a picture of ladies fishing with a line.[3]

Ladies were as fond then as now of riding. One *damoiselle* is recorded as being mounted on a palfrey of Niort—a specially valuable breed—which bore an ivory saddle, with stirrups of gold and trappings of scarlet, whilst the gold bridle had a fringe of the same material. Her costume was a *bliault*, or surcoat, of white satin, and a wimple of linen and silk, her head being enclosed in a fine fabric to keep off the sun.[4]

[1] The earliest treatise in English on hunting and hawking is by a lady, Dame Juliana Berners, prioress of Sopewell, near St. Albans.

[2] See illustration in *Queen Mary's Psalter*.

[3] *Le Roman De Très-Douce Mercy Au Cour D'Amour Épris*.

[4] *Romances of the Round Table*, Gavaine.

At her state entry into Paris, Blanchefleur, Princess of Maurienne, the future queen of Pepin, "had her head bare, while a robe of samit—or satin—gracefully covered her limbs. The palfrey which bore her possessed the whiteness of *fleur-de-lis*; its housings were of the utmost richness," and the bridle alone was worth the weight of a thousand pounds sterling.[1] In Anglo-Saxon MSS. ladies are depicted riding sideways and astride,[2] but in later times this was considered fast.[3]

Equestrian skill naturally formed part of the education of every little girl of high degree, though up to the age of seven maidens were generally left to the care of nurses, and, whilst often treated rather roughly, had the consolations of playing with dolls and wandering unchecked about the castle. What they were taught varied much, the few who were sent to convents possibly learning more than those educated by a governess in the castle. However, it is safe to assert that nearly all girls could read their *Pater*, *Ave*, and *Credo*, and a few of the psalms in their psalter,[4] which is more than most knights could boast. It was a woman who initiated the West in Hellenic mysteries, for the Princess Edivige, betrothed as a child to the Emperor at Constantinople, learnt Greek, but on the engagement being broken off she married the Landgrave of Suavia. As a widow she resided near the monastery of St. Gall, and one day she replied in the older tongue to an aged monk who addressed her in Latin; whereupon a novice observed, "*Esse velim*

[1] *Garin Le Loherain*, ed. P. Paris, Paris, 1833.

[2] *Womankind in Western Europe*, by T. Wright, p. 212.

[3] In the illuminated MS. of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, belonging to the Duke of Sutherland, the Wife of Bath is depicted as riding astride, but neither the nun nor the prioress does so.

[4] Gautier, *La Chivalerie*, p. 134.

Graecus cum vix sim, Domna, Latinus."[1] She smiled at his ready wit, and, having set him at her feet, at once taught him to recite a Greek antiphon. From this chance observation arose the earliest European enthusiasm for Greek.

As feudalism progressed, the romances which began to be current, and which throw such invaluable light on manners, prove that reading took in some measure for women the place occupied by the tales of chance travellers, or the jokes of the jesters. Girls of gentle blood were attendants on the great dames, and whilst they learnt healing[2] and deportment,[3] probably they did little else except play about after the manner of maidens of all generations.

They married young,[4] but it was not considered right for one to be espoused before she was thirteen, or to a lad of less than sixteen. Of course, the heiresses[5] were just as marketable as land, and their dowers were made the subject of barter, although in

[1] "Though I scarce am Latin, Lady, I want to become Greek," a moderate verse containing an ambitiously admirable sentiment.

[2] Nicolette, in the well-known romance, when Aucassin's shoulder was dislocated, "handled it with her white hands and laboured so much that, by God's will, Who loves lovers, it came into its place; and then she took flowers and fresh grass and green leaves, and bound them upon it with the flap of her chemise, and he was quite healed."

[3] Here is a code of instructions written in the thirteenth century:

"En vostre cuer poez pensser
Que le corre ne le crotter
A dame jà bien ne serra."

"Running and trotting, your own heart will tell you, are not becoming in a lady" (*Le Chastoiement Des Dames*, by Robert de Blois).

[4] When Nicolette was loved by Doon of Mayence she was only eleven years old (*Doon de Maience*, 3630). His second wife was only twelve years of age (*Ibid.*, v. 7190). Parise marries at the age of fifteen (*Parise la Duchesse*, ed. Guessard and Larchey in *Anciens poetes de la France*, Paris, 1860).

[5] In feudal times, property in the female line was said to descend by the *quenouille*, or distaff, and a French heiress is called *l'heritiere de quenouille.*

marriage woman was the peer of man,[1] and after the thirteenth century her own will was not so completely ignored.[2] Infant betrothals were common. Sometimes the whole term of a courtship was, however, cut. Baron Garin, sent by his father to the castle of Naimes, dismounted, saluted the grim lord, and proclaimed who he was and that his mission was the hand of his daughter. "You are of noble race," replied Naimes, "and I will give you my daughter of the clear complexion." Whereupon he sent for the maid with the golden locks, and said to her, "Beauty, I have found you a husband." "God be praised," was her prompt remark; whereupon the Archbishop Samson was fetched, and they were married without more ado.[3] Never mind if this tale be fictitious, for fiction holds up the mirror to contemporary life, and a historian of woman can better see what they were like after this fashion than by poring over grave tomes, often dry as dust.

The betrothal was almost as stately an ecclesiastical ceremony as the wedding. In older times oaths were sworn on relics, and the exchange of rings was a more modern custom; while the happy pair both ate off the same plate at the feast. Up to the end of the twelfth century there was no special wedding dress, nor need it be white; but on all state occasions such stiff robes were donned that the wearers could not bend throughout the day. The bride's hair no longer floated over her shoulders, but was confined by silken ribbons in two plaits which were worn in front.[4] It was at the porch of the church that the real marriage took place,

[1] L. Gautier, *La Chivalrie*, p. 351.

[2] The Count of Ponthieu agrees to give his daughter to Thebaut, lord of Dommare, "if she will it" (*Contesse de Ponthieu*).

[3] Aimeri, *Departement Des Enfants*, Bibl. Nat. Fr. 1448, fo. 87.

[4] Viollet-le-Duc, *Dict. du Mobilier*, viii.

the subsequent ritual within the edifice only furnishing the spiritual complement.[1] Whereas a girl had her hand bared, a widow had hers gloved when the ring was put on,[2] whilst at Rouen all the fingers of the woman were touched with the ring.[3] The most gorgeous of the wedding feasts were generally held in specially erected pavilions, and the nuptial chamber was often of the same type.[4]

The bed forms the most important article of furniture in feudalism. It was so large as to resemble a small room in a big one. On the wedding night the priest walked round it, blessing it, and then the bride was put to bed by her ladies. Both sexes were entirely naked in bed, and were in the habit of partly dressing before rising.[5] This is, however, little, compared with the freedom of the unmarried. Not only was her bed the customary seat occupied by a maiden with a page or a knight, but objection to nudity never seemed to have occurred to her.[6] Bathing too was done openly; for example, women bathed together with flowers on their heads,[7] and even if the baths

[1] Martene, *De Antiquis Ecclesiae Ritibus*, II, col. 356.

[2] *Ibid.*, *Ordo IV.* [3] Gautier, *La Chivalerie*, note to p. 427.

[4] *Aiol.*, ed. J. Normand et G. Raynand (*Société des anciens textes français*), Paris, 1877, v. 8319; *Chevalier Au Cygne*, ed. Hippean, Paris, 1874, v. 4096.

[5] Perceval, v. 11,927; and "*votre chemise et vos braies auront place sur le traversin du lit. Le matin, quand vous leverez, passez d'abord votre chemise et vos braies*" (J. Quicherat, texte du XIII siecle, translated in his *Histoire du Costume*, p. 200).

[6] "*Lusiane couche Aiol, puis le fist descanchier, nu devestir*" (*Aiol*, v. 2156, see prior). And wounded heroes are so treated by the fair sex in *Amis and Amilon*, in *Elie de Saint Giles* and *Roman de la Violette*. In *Blonde of Oxford* the heroine visits Jehan in his chamber and stays with him all night "in perfect innocence."

[7] Puis revont entr'eus as estuves
Et se baignent ensemble es cuves
Qu'il ont es chambres toutes prestes
Les chapelets de flors estestes.
(*Romaunt de la Rose*, v. 11, 132).

were only tubs in the basement[1] two aromatic waters were often used,[2] and not only after journeys but after meals bathing was indulged in.[3] What is much more strange is that girls seem to have massaged not only their fathers, but male guests.[4] Hospitality was unbounded, and whatever may have been the ethical standard, the actual standard of morality seems to have been very low. Certainly, in the romances nothing is cloaked, and the immodest advances of pagan maidens such as Esdarmonde, Rosemonde, and Salmadrine are not any worse than those of such Christian heroines as Luciane, Eglantine, and Claresme.

Marchaugy states that in the early education of youth, women were represented as the objects of respectful love and the dispensers of happiness; while it is a graceful fact that the word courtesy comes from the baron's court, and stands for the manners there customary.[5] The love of God and of the ladies was the prime motive of every true knight, and *La Dame des Belles Cousines* held, as touching these, that one should not go without the other, and that the lover who comprehended how to serve a lady loyally was saved. Chaucer wrote: "Women are the cause of all knighthood, the increase of worship and of all worthiness, courteous, glad and merry and true in every

[1] Guillaume de Palermo, v. 5330.

[2] Gilbert de Montreuil, *Roman de la Violette.*

[3] "Apres menger leur furent li caut baing conree" (*Fierabras*, ed. Kroeber et Servois, Paris, 1860, v. 2218).

[4] P. Meyer, *Romania*, iv, 394.

[5]

Asses i a reson por qoi	There is reason enough why
L'en doit fame chière tenir	We ought to hold woman dear;
Quar nous veons poi avenir	For we see happen very little
Cortoise, se n'est par fames.	Courtesy, except through women.
Bien sai que por l'amor des dames	Well know I that for love of ladies
Devienent li vilains cortois.	The very clowns become courteous.

(Quoted by M. Jubinal in *Jongleurs et Trouveres.*)

wise." Occasionally some privilege was attached to the sex—for example, by the customs of Burgundy, a young maid would save the life of a criminal if she met him by accident for the first time going to execution and asked for him in marriage[1]; and often, as St. Palaye observed, a knight would vaunt a passion for a lady he had never seen, the report of whose beauty, however, had reached his ears. If this were an affectation, it was at least better than the promiscuous immorality which seems to have been prevalent.

Little slur in illegitimacy was felt, except in heraldry; for instance, it was never cast in the teeth of William the Conqueror by his Saxon foes. In the knightly family who lived together in his household, Adam du Petit Pont enumerates illegitimate children of the husband and of the wife.[2] Much freedom of conduct existed after marriage,[3] as exemplified by "the fair, courteous dames who have two or three friends as well as their husbands." The Lady *des Belles Cousines* took young Jean de Sanitre and made him her pupil in amorous science, so that he fought through tourneys and battles in her name, and finally, when he pressed her,[4] by her special permission he challenged her husband, and in her presence having overthrown him, was duly valued by this siren.

[1] Sir Kenelm Digby, The Orlandus in *The Broad Stone of Honour*, quoted *ibid.*

[2] Scheler, *Lexicographie Latin du XIIe et du XIIIe Siècle*, p. 123.

[3] "Les beles dames cortoises que eles ont ii amis ou iii avec leur barons." (*Aucassin et Nicolette*).

[4]

Si li dist en riant, saus vie,	And she said to him, laughing, without anger,
Quede s'amor n'est il ja a sire,	That of her love he will never be lord,
De si que sache, sans dolance,	Until she know without doubt
Commant il porte escu et lance,	How he carries shield and lance,
Et s'il en set venir à chief.	And if he knows how to conquer with them.

(Meon, *Fabliaux.*)

Feminine emotions were best displayed at the tournaments, for it was not unusual for ladies to shout offers of love to those waging combat,[1] and sometimes, when excited, they kept throwing gages until they were left in their dress and their hair, having stripped themselves of every ornament.[2] Ladies, especially maidens, dressed and armed the knights and presented them with a favour, which, though usually a sleeve, not infrequently was a chemise. The Queen of the Tournament was a modern invention, not known before the thirteenth century, and before then ladies and men sat together as judges. Usually the prize was a chaplet or a collar, but not infrequently the hand of a girl was the reward of prowess.[3] In the absence of their husbands, the wives of forty knights in a castle by the Rhine one Sunday held a tournament, taking their husbands' names—at least, all except one maiden, who called herself Duke Walrable von Lunberg. She tourneyed with such success that she sent most of the other women out of the saddle. The Duke determined to see the girl who had won such worship in his name, and having presented her with a dowry and two horses, she was soon married to a man of honour.

In the reign of Peter of Aragon, a Spanish lady donned armour and took a French knight prisoner after she had killed his horse. In the *Musee de l'Artillerie* in Paris can be seen the armour worn by Elizabeth de Nassau, mother of Marshal Turenne, and by Charlotte de la Mark, who died in 1594; whilst in 1628 a gardener, digging under the site of the present

[1] Chauvenci, v. 1916.

[2] Quicherat, *Histoire du Costume en France*, p. 184.

[3] Melette of Whittington refused to marry any one but one "handsome, courteous and accomplished, and the most valiant of his body in all Christendom" (*History of the Fitz Warines*).

Bourse in Paris, found nine cuirasses shaped for women. In the time of Edward III women appeared occasionally on horseback armed with daggers, and Orderic Vitalis glorifies Isabella de Couches as a generous and valorous woman in war, mounted and equipped as a knight, and equalling Camilla, Hippolyta, and Penthesilea. A few actually fought in the Crusades, and gave active assistance to the wearied knights, many ladies being killed, notably in the last battle of Antioch,[1] whilst others followed Godfrey de Bouillon to Jerusalem.[2] There can be no doubt that the morals of Europe were debased by this contact with the East.[3]

At home it was to be noted that the husband was advised never to consult his wife,[4] and, in the thirteenth century, Beaumanoir, in his *Coutumes de Beauvaisis*, declares that husbands should only beat their wives reasonably.[5] But if there was some brutality and great licence,[6] woman also had considerable scope. It symbolized a good deal that she should sit by her husband, not only at table but on the settle by the fire. She ordered the domestic arrangements of the castle, and in her husband's absence not only controlled everything, but administered justice and

[1] *Antioche*, ed. P. Paris, Paris, 1848, vol. ii., p. 262.

[2] *Jerusalem*, ed. Hippean, Paris, 1868, v. 207.

[3] There is the episode of the women with the Christian army who all, with the one exception of Ressent de Frise, scandalously forgot their duty when they met the men of the East (*Les Saisnes*, ed. F. Michel, Paris, 1839, LXXVII).

[4] *Raoul de Cambrai*, ed. E. Le Glay, Paris, 1840, p. 44; and "those princes are ill inspired who take counsel in the chambers of ladies" (*Renaus de Montauban*, ed. H. Michelaut, Stuttgart, 1862, p. 14).

[5] Quoted in L. Gautier, *La Chevalerie*, Paris, p. 350, who cites extracts from several novels in illustration.

[6] At the Council of Clermont, at the commencement of the twelfth century, it was complained that it had become the common practice for persons to put away their lawful wives, procure divorces, and take the wives of other men.

brooked no appeal against her authority. Froissart, in his account of the siege of Nerk Castle belonging to the Earl of Salisbury, gives one charming glimpse :—

> "Ther might a ben sene many noble dedes on both partes. Ther was within present the noble Countesse of Salysbury, the most sagest and fayrest ladye of all England. This noble ladye comforted them greatly within for by the regarde of such a ladye, and by her swete comforting, a man ought to be worth two men at nede."

Here is woman in her right sphere as ministering angel. To see her defeminized in armour and depraved in body means loss of idealism, and leaves man the poorer. Woman, as typified in this Countess of Salisbury, in Joan of Arc, in Elizabeth, in Josephine, in Lady Russell, in Florence Nightingale, lives, as a mighty influence, simply because in each case she is transcendent in a suitable sphere.

The aim of all education for woman should be to instil tact. English history shows at least one flagrant want of it. A defeat at Lincoln had left Stephen captive in the hands of his foe; Matilda entered London and was received throughout the land as its "Lady," but the disdain with which she repulsed the claim of the city to the enjoyment of its older privileges raised its burghers to arms.[1] She took the title of Queen without being crowned,[2] and when in terror of pursuit at Devizes laid herself on a bier and, bound to it with ropes as if she were a corpse, was thus carried into Gloucester.[3]

Perhaps the greatest of the feudal queens was

[1] J. R. Green, *Short History of the English People*, 1881, p. 98.
[2] *Monast. Anglic.* i. 44.
[3] *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, art. "Matilda," by Kate Norgate, vol. xxxvii., p. 57.

Blanche of Castille (1185–1252), widow of Louis VIII, who died in 1226. English insularity foolishly remembers that it was she who gathered the army that was driven into the sea by their forefathers, and forgets that in any age she would have been a foremost diplomatist. According to one chronicler she was a disconsolate widow,[1] but she proved a devoted mother, superintending St. Louis' education,[2] consolidating his kingdom, and, after he attained his majority, exacting from him the same implicit obedience. Although she herself selected Marguerite, eldest daughter of Raymond Berenger IV, Count of Provence, whom he married at thirteen, she was so jealous of her son's love for his wife that the married pair, when together, used to post servants to bring them intelligence when she was coming.[3] She was the most prudent of her generation, and, whilst free of speech, her firmness was invaluable to France, and her regency during her son's disastrous crusade culminated in her suppression of the strange rising of the Pastoureaux. On her death-bed Blanche became a *religieuse* of the Order of Citeaux.[4]

Religious devotion was intermingled with most

[1] "*Elle se fuste meme osté la vie si l'on ne l'eust retenne*" (Philippe Mourkes, v. 27,303).

[2] Duchesne, p. 396.

[3] St. Louis caused to be engraved on his ring, "Dieu, France et Marguerite," adding, "hors cet anel n'ai point amour" (Montalembert, *Histoire da Sainte Élizabeth de Hongrie*, Paris ed. 1889, vol. i. p. 371).

[4] Thibaut IV, Count of Champagne, afterwards King of Navarre, a troubadour, addressed this pretty poem to Blanche of Castille:—

Il n'est d'auncuns qui me veulent blamer
Quand je ne dis a qui je suis ami,
Mais nul ne saura mon penser
Nul qui soit ne hors vous a qui le dis
Couardement, a pavour, a doutance,
Vous putes bien alors a ma semblance
Mon cher savoir,
Dame merci, donnez-moi l'esperance
De joie avoir.

forms of feudal life, quite apart from the fervour that inspired the crusades. It was, for instance, a daily habit of all to attend mass in the castle chapel, and the abbreviation known as the hunting mass was introduced to aid the impatience of those yearning for the chase. The sexes used to be separated in church,[1] and even ladies used to squat on the ground to listen to the preacher.[2] In the romance, Aelis was once peacocking in the chapel, chattering with her friends, when she saw a jester obviously searching for what he could not find. On her asking him what he sought, he replied, "A Christian girl," a rebuke much enjoyed by those who heard the tale read. A preacher seeing lions and dragons embroidered on a lady's girdle, said, "Behold the images of those who will devour you in hell."[3]

Teetotalism was never preached and never practised by either sex. The feudal dames had big appetites. In the dining-hall, carpeted with skins and adorned with paintings in yellow and red ochre,[4] sometimes with a little blue and black added, or hung with tapestries in which the temple of Solomon predominated as a subject,[5] all fed according to their degree. Dinner was at noon, and the gold spoon and knife before each lady at the high table marked her importance, precedence being immensely debated in those times of heraldic supremacy. All the food used to be thrown on pell mell except at the great banquets, which were

[1] *Anseis, fils de Gerbert*, Bibl. Nat. Fr. 4988, fo. 261.

[2] M.S. Reg. 20cvii. fol. 77; and MS. Harl. No. 2897, fol. 157.

[3] Anecdotes historiques tirées du *Recueil* inédit d'Etienne de Bourbon par Lecoy de la Marche, p. 230.

[4] In the twelfth century the art of architectural painting attained its highest apogee during the Middle Ages. This art was developed in the cloisters and came from the Grecian Byzantine art (Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire d'Architecture*, vii., pp. 57 and 59).

[5] To cite only one instance, "En une chambre painte de l'eore Sallmon" (*Aye d'Avignon*, ed. Guenard et P. Meyer, Paris, 1861, v. 2510).

of interminable length.[1] Heavy meats were popular, especially pork, and before the twelfth century roasting was the one method of cookery. Game was much eaten, as well as swans, peacocks, chickens, and pigeons. Sometimes out of a huge pasty would come a hundred little birds, but twenty merlins would be let loose to make short work of them without feminine protest.[2] The gold cups were recharged for every course, and not only wine but heavily spiced decocted drinks were in great vogue. Every one was served by those of less rank than themselves not only at dinner but at supper, whilst on retiring to rest drink was always demanded.

No heed was given to those languishing in the dungeons below,[3] but as the fair sex stooped over their wonderful embroideries, musicians played, jesters diverted, or travellers told their tales. Everything ended in dancing, for in feudal times they danced everywhere, the popular *carol* being merely dancing in a ring; but the long list given by Rabelais proves how much variety could be introduced. In the winter, chess, dames (which became our draughts), hunt the slipper, blindman's buff, and other romping games were in high favour. And from this let us emphasize the fact that in feudal times high spirits were paramount, and everybody loved to laugh. There was plenty of hard fighting—and it was honest fighting, for the mercenaries earned their pay and treachery was duly hated. But when not fighting the men were ready to join with the women in every cheerful

[1] Feeding often outlasted daylight in winter—that is to say, eight hours (see *Perceval*, v. 9617).

[2] *Flore*, v. 3188.

[3] *La prison k'ot dux Bueves ert moult orde et pullente. Bueves de Commarchis*, ed. A. Scheler, Brussels, 1874, v. 785. *Et oient la vermine en tour eus fremillier. Gaufrey*, ed. Guessard et Chabaille, Paris, 1860, v. 1636.

device. It was not only in "Ye Merrie Englande" and in "Ye Gaie Provence" that merriment abounded. People, if they were not very well educated, were certainly very light-hearted. There were many inconveniences,—oppression, tortures, jealousy, injustice, and so forth, with many things that we now think terrible but which were tolerated by the easier code of morality; but sadness, except from bereavement, or from blighted affection, was voted intolerable; whilst to dispel the *ennui*, which must have been the bugbear of the period, all tried to contribute to the general stock of cheerful amusement.

Love reached its height in Provence, where the troubadours not only spoke of love's laws, but where ladies adjudicated on questions of love. In the code of thirty-one laws, erroneously ascribed to Andreas Capellanus, are such as "marriage is not a legitimate excuse against love," "no one can be bound by two loves at the same time"; and, in contradiction, "nothing prevents one woman being loved by two men, or one man by two women." The Courts of Love grew to be serious affairs,[1] and it was only latterly that men held office. These trials were always held in the open air, generally in "ye merry monthe of Maie."

In no age was woman more admired, and therefore it is worth trying to describe what type appealed to the men and women of feudalism, for which purpose it is fitting to have recourse to the romances. At the outset we are face to face with the startling fact that there is not one brunette, but they are without exception blondes.[2] To-day in Italy it is a fair woman who

[1] Excellent accounts are to be found in *Le Moyen Age et la Renaissance*, by Paul Lacroix and Ferdinand Sere, Paris.

[2] L. Gautier, *La Chevalerie*, p. 374.

is most admired, and the *Gretchen* type has become the proverbial Teutonic ideal. On the shoulders of this typical beauty her hair falls, more glittering than gold in the sea.[1] A golden cord bands[2] this hair, which is blonde, formed into a small circle.[3] Her colouring is white, on which roses rest,[4] for she is whiter than a milken nut, and more rosy than a budding rose.[5] Her flesh is also beautiful, and whiter than nuts in February. She has a bright countenance,[6] with a high and broad forehead;[7] given which, her face may be round,[8] or oval.[9] Her eyes must be *vair* as crystal,[10] which is interpreted as blue or azure, whilst the English *gray* may have been nearly the same.[11] Her mouth was small as that of a child of three months,[12] and well made, with teeth regular as though they had been planted,[13] and white as bone of whale,[14] with large red lips.[15] A dimpled chin,[16] a nose well-formed,[17] and ears white and fair and delicate,[18] are all necessities. Her neck must be whiter than polished

[1] *Anseis de Carthage*, Bibl. Nat. Fr. 693, f. 7.

[2] *Girard de Viane*, "Blonc et le poil menu recercle." Ed. P. Turbe, Reims, 1850.

[3] *Aquin*, ed. F. Jouon des Longrais (Societe de Bibliophiles Bretons), Nantes, 1880, v. 311.

[4] *Prince d'Orange*, ed. Jonckbloet, The Hague, 1854, v. 666.

[5] *Destruction of Rome*, ed. Grobier, *Romania*, 1873, v. 355.

[6] *Auberi*, ed. Tobler, p. 183, v. 22.

[7] *Fierbras*, ed. Kroeber et Servois, Paris, 1860, v. 2013.

[8] *Le Chevalier Au Cygne*, "roumt," ed. Hippean, Paris, 1874.

[9] *Doon de Maience*, ed. A. Pey, Paris, 1859, v. 3628, "le vis lonc et traitis, bien fet et avenant."

[10] *Gonbert et les Deux Clercs.*

[11] "Hyre eyghen aren grete ant gray ynot," (*Specimens of Lyric Poetry of the Thirteenth Century*, ed. by T. Wright, p. 34).

[12] *Ogier de Dunemarche*, ed. Barois, Paris, 1842, v. 1032.

[13] *Elie de Saint Gilles*, ed. G. Raynand, Paris, 1879, v. 1704.

[14] *Specimens, supra.*

[15] *Fierbras*, v. 2012, see *supra.*

[16] *Gautier d'Aupais*, ed. F. Michel, p. 6.

[17] *Roman de la Rose*, ed. F. Michel, vol. i., p. 32.

[18] *Blonde of Oxford.*

ivory;[1] her body elegant and of good make;[2] her arms round, an ell long; her shoulder in keeping;[3] hands lily-white; this delicious creation had to have small breasts and firm; her form whiter than flowers in the meadows;[4] her limbs long and her feet very soft[5]—suggestive of feminine helplessness.

Such was a mediæval beauty. We may merely add that her extravagance in dress would have done credit to an American woman of to-day. There is no rose without a thorn, no woman without some attractive perversity.

FEMININE BOURGEOISIE IN FEUDAL TIMES

Few thing are so difficult, in the feudal period, as to obtain a picture of any mediæval woman of decent character, below the baronial class, who was not a votary of the religious life. Here and there some phrase for a moment casts a flash on an individual —as, for example, on Lappa, the mother of Catherine of Siena; but when the atmosphere is not rarified by devotional enthusiasm, it is too dense to allow the normal woman to be discerned. A few suggestive statements can, however, be made with accuracy, and these, at least, prevent omission of this portion of the subject.

Those who are not in sympathy with the middle-class and lower-class woman of to-day, bound by petty prejudices, oppressed by idleness, or crushed by overpowering toil and cares, will not be tempted to extol her ancestress, whose coarseness was not cloaked

[1] *Anseis*, 793, f. 7.
[2] *Marie, Lai d'Equitan*, Poesies, ed. Roquefort, vol i., p. 116.
[3] *Chevalier Au Cygne*, v. 7096. See *supra*.
[4] *Fierbras*, v. 2037. See *supra*.
[5] *Girard de Viane*, ed. P. Turbe, Reims, 1850, p. 90.

Lombardi

BRONZE RELIQUARY OF ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

by the hypocrisy which is to-day rampant all over Europe and America. The burgher woman was ill-educated and violent in temper, uncouth in manners and foul of speech. She tried to tyrannize over her husband and would beat him when she could, being often, in her turn, soundly belaboured.[1] She was probably a better housewife than we usually see out of France to-day, understood her husband's business, managed it in many cases for him, and could drink nearly as hard as he. For the tavern was the resort of the respectable good wife just as much as of her mate,[2] and to that she went on her way to and from church, or when marketing. In fact it was her house of call, the place where the gossip of the town was discussed. It is notable that stringent regulations had to be made against drinking around the bed of a woman just become a mother; and in the twelfth century it was even enacted that but once in the first week after her confinement, and then only after dinner, might the mother, stepmother and the feminine relatives be admitted, when they might only be regaled with Rhenish wine, fruit, bread and cheese.[3] Cheese was the favourite food of the *bourgeoisie* in the Middle Ages, and seems to have been the staple article of diet in the country.

Municipalities might pass what enactments they liked. There is no doubt the women laughed at those that did not suit them.

Large families were the rule. In St. Jean en Grève at Paris is buried a woman who, from two sons and three daughters, saw issue one hundred and ten

[1] *Woman in Western Europe*, by T. Wright, 1869, p. 167.

[2] One illustration to be cited out of hundreds is in the *Life of St. Fiacre*, a religious play printed by Jubinal from an MS. of the fifteenth century.

[3] S. Dentson, *Leben im* 14 *und* 15 *Jhdt.*, 183 ff.

children;[1] and in 1573, a decree of the *parlement* of Dijon exempted from taxation any one who was father of twelve children, provided they were all alive.[2] In the choice of a husband the woman seems to have enjoyed considerable freedom—a liberty which extended to her conduct in subsequent years. The betrothal was as important a ceremony as the subsequent one in the church, and furnished the occasion for a festivity and a large gathering of friends. In the country, courtship seems to have been more prolonged than in the towns.[3] Life there must have developed only the rougher side of character, but it is significant that pastoral life is always depicted as having a refining effect on the character. Shakespeare, with his shepherds in *As You Like It* and *A Winter's Tale*, only echoes and glorifies the types that live again and again in the Pastourelles of the thirteenth century. In these latter and earlier times the poor folk appear in the country to have gone bare-footed, as most certainly did the Anglo-Saxons, whose children seem to have been left naked until they were old enough to walk.[4] The midwife was a person of consequence long before the surgeons, surgery being created in France by the barbers.[5]

However scanty the education of girls, they were always taught to spin.[6] It was their lifelong occupation. The state of the schools certainly did not encourage parents to send their daughters to them,[7] for the promiscuous mingling for education gave scope for

[1] Sanval, *Antiquités de Paris*, vol. ii., p. 551.

[2] J. Brillon, *Dictionnaire des Arrets*, vol. ii., p. 62.

[3] Harl. MS., 603, fol. 12.

[4] A Franklin, *La Vie Privée D'Autrefois.*

[5] *Les Chirurgiens*, Paris, 1896, p. 2.

[6] "Sa fame ont trovée filant." Reputed fables of Barat and Harniet in thirteenth century.

[7] Valter Schumann, *Nachtbüchlein* ii. Vorrede 1559, fol. 76a.

Neurdein

ELOISE

FROM AN ENGRAVING

immorality, and when the mystics thundered against corruption, they often did so in language we should regard as only fit for libertines. The association of Eloise and Abelard has become one of the romances of history. Eloise (1101–64), who was illegitimate, was brought up by a canon Fulbert, and became learned in the new scholasticism before she came under the influence of Abelard. He was the handsomest man and greatest scholar of his time, who had come to such a point that from no woman whom he honoured with his love need he fear refusal. His passion for Eloise was cut short by an atrocious physical outrage perpetrated on him by the minions of Fulbert. Thereupon he compelled Eloise to take the veil at Argenteuil before he became a priest. This was superfluous, for in her words, "if he had precipitated himself into the flames, I should not have hesitated to follow him." They continued to see each other, and after he had established the Paraclet at Nogent, she brought thither her convent under Benedictine rule. Having survived him two and twenty years, honoured by popes and princes, her bones were placed in the same tomb as that of her lover. In the phrase of the French writer, M. Paul de Saint Victor, they "are for ever the types of perfect love."

This is how she wrote to Abelard: "At the moment of the solemnity of the Mass, when prayer should be most pure, the obscene pictures of our past pleasures so captivate my miserable soul, that I yield to these shameful thoughts rather than to prayer. I weep not for the faults I commit, but for those I no longer commit. My chastity is praised, my hypocrisy is not seen. To the credit of virtue is carried purity of the flesh, as though virtue were the affair of the body and not of the soul. I do not seek for the crown of victory; it is

enough for me to escape the peril; it is safer to flee danger than to engage battle. In whatever corner of Heaven God gives me a place, He will have done enough for me. There no one will envy any one, all will be content with their fate."[1]

It must be borne in mind that the celibacy of the clergy had a far greater effect on the women of the middle classes than on those of higher station, and the abuse of morality was one of the causes that led to the Reformation. "Priestesses," the concubines who lived with the clergy, became a recognised class, notorious for their impertinence.[2] They were especially to the fore at the pic-nic parties in summer and the gatherings for bathing together in winter.[3] No doubt they were not reluctant to join in the dancing, which seems to have been as general among the town and country folk as in the castles of feudalism, though, of course, the antics of the peasants were ruder. In order to get maidens married, the Dame de L'Isle d'Ayty caused three hundred of them to dance nude at a big gathering[4]; but in respectable burgher circles there seems to have been a marked affectation of decorousness in dancing.

There were no country houses before the eleventh century, and it is impossible also to give an accurate idea of a middle class house of that period.[5] It is when Albert Dürer depicts a contemporary interior

[1] *Lettres d'Abelard et Héloïse*, ed. by Octave Greard, 2nd edition, 1875; the second letter of Héloïse, p. 105–109.

[2] "A wyffe he hadde come of noble kyn
The parsoun of the toun her fader was."
(Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, l. 3940).

[3] Among street cries, that of the valets announcing that the public baths were ready, was one of the most general in 1292. (A. Franklin, *Modes, Mœurs*, Usages des Parisiens, 1896, L'Hygiene).

[4] Zeiler, *Hilb.* 437.

[5] Stephani, *Der älteste deutsche Wohnbau*, vol. i., p. 1, Leipzig, 1902.

in his Annunciation of the Madonna[1] that we really obtain a genuine impression. "Show me a home, and I will tell you what the woman is like who manages it." There can be no doubt that at this epoch the domestic servant difficulty was quite as rampant as to day, and the hired women were as ready to cheat and to deceive.[2] It may be added that in every romance, wherever the mistress misconducts herself the maid follows suit as a matter of course.[3] The familiarity between servant and mistress must have been considerable, for in the *bourgeoisie* the goodwife looked after the kitchen herself, and all homespun until the thirteenth century actually deserved the name, house-industry knowing no outside competition. During the hours devoted to work, gossip was perpetual.[4] If a stranger entered, all rose, and kissing was general in the North, especially in England.[5] Music was general, for every one could sing[6]; and in *Le Dit de la Pasture* of Christine de Pisan (b. 1363)—daughter of the astrologer to the French king, Charles V, and probably the first woman of Western Europe who sought to live by her pen—each shepherdess has an attendant shepherd who plays either on the flageolet or the pipe. Marie of France, who lived in the country in the time

[1] *Kulturg. Bilderb.* 21, n. 5.

[2] Dr. Alwin Schmitz, *Das Häusliche Leben der Europäischen Kulturvolkes*, Munich, 1903, p. 339.

[3] Jourdain de Blavies relates the fidelity of the faithful servants Renier and Éremboure, who prefer to starve rather than give up the son of their chief to his foes. The wife counsels her husband to remember that the day of judgment comes, that day when all traitors will be condemned, for their rich furs and fine gold will be of no use, and happy they who may enter Paradise. This is an example of honourable devotion, instances of which could be easily multiplied.

[4] *Les Evangiles des Quenouilles*, Paris Bibliothèque Elzevirienne.

[5] This custom is gracefully handled by Mr. Maurice Hewlett in *Little Novels of Italy*.

[6] "En chantant a haulte alaine,
Ceinturetes, je faisoie."
(MS. Harl. 1431, fol. 223).

of our Henry III, also furnishes in her works glimpses of contemporary gaiety.

Women seem to have been prone to flock to the Jews, who were skilled physicians, and the Council of Beziers in 1246 excommunicated all who were attended by them[1]; whilst the Council of Tortosa in 1429 forbade more than three visits from physicians to any sick person who had not confessed since the beginning of her illness.[2] Widowhood was severely observed, but there was no sign, so far as outward dress was concerned, until the fourteenth century,[3] and it was commented on as a Spanish eccentricity that widows in that kingdom wore black.[4]

The fair sex undoubtedly co-operated in that rise of a *bourgeois* aristocracy which became the depository of learning and the class from which intellectual and commercial initiatives were derived in later times. It may be cited that St. Louis of France died in the arms of Aelis, the daughter of Etienne Barbette, whom he had elevated, just as Henry II advanced Becket. She married in her own class, Jean Sarragin, a rich Parisian draper, and was buried in the cloister of the abbey St. Victor in 1293. The charge against the women of the middle class by the earnest clergy was that they bared their bosoms, but Christine de Pisan accused them of extravagance. An average example of the costume may be taken from the tomb of Hermessinde de Balligny, wife of René de la Porte, a burgher of Senlis. She died in 1284, and her effigy represents her in a long, plain dress, with a mantle

[1] Art. XLIII, Labbe and Cossart, vol. xi. col. 686.

[2] *Ordon. Royales*, vol. iii., p. 603.

[3] A. Franklin, *La Vie Privée D'Autrefois*, Paris, 1896, *Magasin des Nouveautés*, p. 30.

[4] Pierre le Venerable, ep. lib. iv. ep. xvii. in Marrier, *Bibliotecha Cluniancensis*, ed. 1614, col. 841.

lined with fur descending to her feet, her only ornament being the clasp on it. Her head is encased in a *coif*[1] with two fillets of hair. The carpenter's wife in Chaucer's *Tales* wore the attire of the lower class, a plain, probably faded, red dress with a white apron.

[1] These *coifs* resembled night-caps, were made of cotton, and laid quite flat on the head; they were worn by both sexes equally, but were not becoming. (Montfançon, *Monumens de la monarchie française*, vol. ii., p. 14.)

JOAN OF ARC

1410–1431

A STUDY of the times practically permits the statement that the character of Joan of Arc saved France. Each famous woman possesses some salient trait. Laura was placid and essentially aristocratic. Whatever the real Beatrice, for posterity she has become an ideal: that is to say, the ideal of Dante. Joan pre-eminently possessed courageous enthusiasm. She saw that her dear land of France was not only widely devastated, but was reduced to a demoralization that made the people and the leaders despair. Soldiers still marched, knights still rode in the French ranks. What was entirely lacking was courageous confidence, and this essential Joan brought to the leaders and to the masses.

It was an unexpected quarter from which the light should come. There would have been no cause for surprise had some knight from a great house like that of Pardiac, Clermont, or La Trémouille displayed the characteristic individuality requisite for the national reorganization.

Fifty years before a Du Guesclin had saved France. Why should not history repeat itself? In Bohemia and Hungary the tempestuous oratory of a Franciscan friar, Capistrano, combated the Hussites and routed the Turks. There was no reason why a monk should not play a similar part in France. French priests have shone more as diplomatists than as inciters to crusades. Machiavelli and not Peter

JOAN OF ARC

AFTER A PAINTING BY SCHNETZ

the Hermit seemed to attract the clerical politicians of a France that was one day to be under the iron hand of Richelieu before it was humiliated by having to fawn on the Italian Mazarin.

There is no reason for surprise that the delivery of France in the fifteenth century came through a woman, because French married women have, as a rule, possessed unwonted energy of thought and action. The singularly keen alertness in all relations of life of the French married woman is in marked contrast to that of the sex in every other land, whether Teutonic or Latin. It is, however, noteworthy that during girlhood this is torpid. The seclusion in which the French maiden is kept is so strict as to curb all natural exuberance and absolutely to check self-reliance.

Had the feminine saviour of fifteenth-century France, who was to provide the incalculable boon of national confidence, arisen from the ranks of married women, it would not have been remarkable—such effective political agents have been provided by Frenchwomen in most centuries. But that this desirable personality should proceed from the aloofness of French girlhood,—that out of Lorraine a mere maid should come to inspire the nation,—there indeed is a potent phenomenon.

Of course there is no such thing as independent personality: there are no peaks without mountains. The greatest of each epoch is the best resultant of forces of the times, and beyond that highest expression there is nothing humanly possible. Three individual phenomena are alike salient in modern history: Napoleon is the logical outcome of the forces of Revolution; Shakespeare provides the epitome of the Northern Renaissance, the centralization of the

New Age which in him reached a zenith of immortal glory for all time; Joan stands as the arch-realization of motive force in woman. No greater than she ever lived, and her potency is that she was so essentially feminine. In her homeliness she is typical of all the Frenchwomen who sit beside their husbands in the shop; in her character is that bright charm which is the delightful attribute of the women of her nation: they are always smiling, always witty, and even in times of trial as naïve as a flower.

In one sense Joan was the immediate resultant of local influences, for she lived in the neighbourhood of Troyes, where, in 1420, had been made the treaty which handed over France to the English king. Popular indignation was greater in Lorraine than elsewhere in the country. Intestine wars appeared to have totally extirpated the love of France in the hearts of her men and women, leaving little but envenomed and enraged partisans. In Lorraine patriotism still lurked, just as in Brittany Catholicism lives to-day. Unsmirched by considerations of party, French patriotism yet lived in the hearts of those who at all times have been held representative of the sanctity and purity of unapproachable womanhood—maidens.

It was therefore comprehensible that the arch-type focussing in her soul the entire ethical forces of her country should be a girl. Joan over and over again said she was inspired by "voices." And we understand that she heard the voice of the conscience of France crying in vain for help from the men of her nation and addressing itself as a last resource to the pure heart of a girl. A religious parallel may be found in the Gallic revelation of the Cult of the

Sacred Heart, which found expression not in one of the great Orders of the Catholic Church, but in the humble devotion of Marguerite Marie. This girl believed that in her manifestation lay a new influence for good. So Joan rightly felt that in her character lay the guarantee of the salvation of her nation. It was strength of character and belief in ethical power that were lacking, and these she, a perfectly innocent girl, brought as a healing benefaction to her hapless countrymen.

As I have once before written: "The conscience of France, driven from all its former abodes, was forced, as it were, to take refuge in the last possible place of rest, and from there it would reach again the heart of the nation. What Joan felt was that she could bring to her people the very purity and strength of character that the great majority of French maidens bring to their husbands. As no Frenchman ever reaches his true level without being married to a well brought up French girl, so France was, in the second and third decades of the fifteenth century, miserably tottering from failure to failure until the right maiden took the country under her patronage. The great force of Joan of Arc was, as may now be seen, neither in her insight nor in her military qualities, but in her singularly sublime character. France was thus in the position of a dissolute young man, who can be saved not only by the purity and sweetness, but also by the determined energy of a young bride. Joan felt her vocation with the same unerring clearness that many a maiden has felt, that she could bring steadiness and happiness to the unbalanced young recipient of her chaste love." That she expressed that certitude of vision in a mystical theological manner is only a proof that she wore the spiritual habiliments then in fashion.

This does not alter her vocation and does not dim her sincerity. It only heightens her spirituality and tinges with poetical grace the most beautiful soul that ever was enshrined in a girl.

There is one point distinctly humiliating to English pride in the long history of the wars with France. It is that the English as completely failed to hold their conquests as the Germans of to-day fail as colonists. Fourteen years after the victory of Crecy the only English possessions in France were the three fortified strongholds of Bayonne, Bordeaux, and Crecy. The sturdy English archer might be more than a match for the serried throng of French knights, but his heart was in his own island, and he failed to hold what he won so doughtily at a distance from his home.

Just as among the Jews at the time of our Saviour some looked that Messiah should come, so in France there were a few hints of the advent of a national redeemer. If the bulk of the signs betokened the close of the French nationality, preachers like Thomas Connecte in Picardy and the Cordelian friar Richart urged repentance.[1] The latter predicted for 1430 great marvels. In 1429 Marie d'Avignon told Charles VII that in an ecstasy she had presented armour to him that it might be worn by a young virgin who would soon free the realm from its enemies;[2] and centuries previously Merlin had prophesied that in her greatest desolation a virgin should

[1] When the latter preached at St. Denis, thousands passed the night in the fields to be in time, and afterwards a hundred bonfires were lighted in which gentlemen burnt their gaming appliances and ladies their false hair.

[2] Machiavelli points out that no important event has ever failed to be heralded by forecasts and prodigies. Savonarola foretold the coming of Charles VII (*Disc. Tit. Liv.*, LI, chap. lvi.).

fall on the back of the *Sagittaire*, i.e. defeat the nation of archers.[1]

Joan was the third of five children born to a small cultivator, whose wife, of superior station, possessed elevated sentiments. Like so many feminine saints, Joan early showed a distaste for amusement, and spent all her leisure praying in the church of Domremi, and it is interesting that her favourite saints were Catherine, who at eighteen refuted famous pagan philosophers, and Margaret. Whilst watching a flock on the bank of the Meuse she became moved with patriotic impulses, and it may be added that she was singularly susceptible to the sound of a bell and slept but little. The first manifestation of her "voices" was in her father's garden, when she heard an unknown one bid her to be always pious and charitable and to rely on divine protection. Whereupon she enthusiastically consecrated her virginity in perpetuity. Later this voice became identified to her as that of St. Michael, whilst the two favourite saints already cited frequently held intercourse with her. Such manifestations are common in hagiology; one of the most notable is believed to have happened at Lourdes. Scriptural parallels are easy to be found—for example, the experience of Hagar, the mother of Esau, before the birth of that mighty man. Joan was soon inspired to move to arouse her countrymen,[2] but parental prohibition, as usual, hampered the first motions of the saint. It was even desired to marry her to a respectable man, and she had to defend herself publicly to disprove a pre-

[1] *Trial of Joan of Arc*, published by the Society of French History, 1841–9, III, 83, 84.

[2] Isabel reported: "*qu'il avoit songie que avec les gens d'armes s'en iroit Jehanne sa fille; si je cuidoye que la chose advensist, ajoutait-il en s'addressant à ses fils, je vouldroye que la noyessiès et si vous ne la faisiès je la noieroye moymesme.*" (*Trial*, i. 132. Inter. March 12, 1431.)

tended breach of promise.[1] Of what manner of woman Joan was, here is a picture:—

> "Joan, then aged seventeen and a half, was big and perfectly made, thanks to fresh air and labour in the fields. Her chest and throat were developed, her figure was fine, her arms and legs vigorous, but she had small hands and small feet. Her eyes, at once soft, tender, and proud, inspired confidence. Her brow was very high. She had black hair and a very white skin hardly tinted. Her voice was soft, melodious, and deep. She united nobility of form and all the beauty and grace of her sex to the physical strength of common men. To prepare herself for the mission of which she dreamed, she practised riding with skill and grace after the fashion of men."[2]

She sought a commander, Robert de Baudricourt, at Vancouleurs, who first suggested she should be soundly thrashed and sent back to her father. Then, when she intimated her mission, and that she came at the command of her Lord—

"Who is your Lord?" he asked.

"The King of Heaven," she answered; on which he dismissed her with gibes.

"Before mid-Lent I must be near the King, if I have to wear out my legs to the very knees. For nothing in the world, neither kings nor dukes, nor the daughter of the King of Scotland [to whom it was a question of betrothing the Dauphin], nor others, can save the kingdom of France. Help can only come from me, although I would rather spin beside my poor mother, for it is not fitting to my station to go to

[1] *Trial* already cited. Interrogatory of February 22, 1431.

[2] *Jeanne D'Arc*, by N. Villiaume, Paris, 1863, chap. IV. p. 60.

succour kingdoms; but I must do it because my Saviour wishes it."

Having warned Baudricourt of a defeat of which it was only possible to learn six days later, he at length led her to the King, who refused to see her but submitted her to interrogatories. To them she answered that, on behalf of the King of Heaven, she had to accomplish two things: to raise the siege of Orleans, and to conduct the Dauphin to be crowned at Rheims. At that very time the Bastard of Orleans, alarmed for the safety of his town, sent to the King to know if it was true that a virgin had come to his succour.

Admitted to his presence, the Sovereign tried to persuade her that some one else was he; but Joan would not be deceived, and her enthusiasm impressed him. It was characteristic that she obtained from him promises to give God thanks for his kingdom, to pardon his rebellious subjects, and to receive all who came, rich or poor alike.[1] Asked in what idiom her voices expressed themselves, she replied to Brother Seguin, "Better than yours." On which, somewhat confused, he asked, "Do you believe in God?" and obtained the answer, "More than you do."[2] To the inquiry why she did not dress as a woman, she said, "I wear what is suitable and necessary for what I have to do"; and when they wanted to know why she called the King Dauphin, "I will only call him King when he has been consecrated at Rheims, whither I will lead him."[3] Thereupon she dictated her celebrated *sommation* "to the King of England, and to you, Duke of Bedford, calling yourself Regent." A committee of investigation was sent to Poitiers; another of matrons, presided over by the Queen, interrogated Joan, and

[1] *Trial*, iv. p. 486. Eberhard de Windecken.
[2] His own evidence, *Trial*, iii., p. 204.
[3] Evidence of F. Garivel, *Trial*, iii. p. 20.

finally it was settled she should be sent at the head of an army to Orleans.

Her establishment was a princely one. To complete the rich armour in which she was clad, she would have no other sword than one she knew to be near the altar of St. Catherine of Fierbois. Her standard she ordered to be made of white, and covered with innumerable lilies. On it was painted the image of God in the clouds, holding the world in His hand, with two angels worshipping, whilst the reverse showed the Virgin at the Annunciation. She preferred to carry this banner rather than any sword, and she never slew any man. She insisted on several priests escorting her, and upon divine service being performed twice daily. By night she slept fully armed in the open air. It was to be noted that however sumptuous the food, she would eat only bread dipped in a cup of wine with water—the local custom of women of her rank in Lorraine. She found that her military orders were viewed with suspicion, and resented this.

After encouraging the storming of the Bastille, Joan appeared deeply overcome at the sight of a field of battle, and refused to continue on the next day because it was the feast of the Ascension. This girl, who never shrank from the fury of a fight, wept when she heard an opprobrious term about herself, shrinking in the outraged modesty of her instinctive purity. She released all prisoners, was the first to put a scaling ladder to the walls, and was slightly wounded, but recovered, led a charge, and by torchlight entered Orleans, proceeding at once to the Cathedral for a triumphant *Te Deum*. It was noteworthy that she initiated the only tactics suitable to French soldiers, namely, impetuous advance. Like Prince Eugene and Frederic the Great, she committed the blunder in

tactics of exposing her own life, that of the leader; but all three alike did it, because they believed the only way to obtain victory was to show their followers that they themselves ran the most danger.

To an inquiry as to her authority on some point, she answered, "I will tell you willingly. When I am wounded because belief is not shown in what I say from God, I pray to Him in secret to tell me why. When my prayer is ended I hear a voice which says, 'Daughter of God, proceed; I will sustain thee.' At the sound of that voice I feel such transport that I long to be always in that state."

Entreated by D'Aulon, who was often alone with her, to manifest her advisers to him, she having told him one never left her, one often came to her, and the third deliberated with them, she dryly answered:

"You are neither worthy nor virtuous enough to see them."

"On the morrow you shall be in Troyes," she one day told the King, and to his surprise a capitulation fulfilled her prophecy. Deep indeed must have been her emotions at his coronation, as she knelt before him, weeping and kissing his knees. Her patriotism was the keynote of her religion.

Riding between the Archbishop of Rheims and the Bastard, amid a joyous welcome near Crespy-en-Valois, Joan said, "Here are a goodly people, and the most rejoiced yet at the advent of their King. Would to God I were happy enough when my days are ended to be buried in this place."

"Where do you hope to die?" asked the cleric.

"Where God wills, for I have no more assurance of time or place than you. Oh! if only it would please my Creator that I should now lay by my arms and serve my father and mother by guarding their flocks

with my brothers, who would be rejoiced to see me!"[1]

At St. Denis she held two children at the font to be christened, and then seeing a courtesan among some soldiers, she seized her sword, and smote them so severely with the flat of it that it broke into many fragments.[2]

Having been wounded in the assault on Paris, she gave her orders lying in a ditch, and when convalescent solemnly went to the Church of St. Denis, followed by the King and princes, to return thanks and to hang her arms on a column of the church.

It was whilst besieging Melun that her "voices" first told her that she would be taken prisoner, but she was not to be alarmed but to bear the trial with patience, and that God would help her.[3] Daily this intimation was renewed to the girl, who was expending her strength for a king who devoted himself to frivolity and pleasure. Too soon a little party, among which she was, found themselves surrounded, and the capture of the saviour of France was made the subject of public rejoicings in Paris. The Archbishop of Rheims announced she was a prisoner, and added, "She would not heed advice, but acted her own pleasure; therefore God has manifested that the abasement of such pride is no matter for regret."

The Church, apart from her few attendant priests, had never supported her, and now the English were cited to hand her over for trial on charges of heresy, the bulk of her seventy-one judges or assessors being clerics. The infamous Bishop of Beauvais, Pierre

[1] Be it noted that the Bastard has alone recorded this utterance.

[2] Lebrun de Charmettes, *Histoire de Jeanne d'Arc* (Paris, 1817), vol. ii., p. 426.

[3] Interrogatory of March 10, 1431.

Cauchon, has come down to posterity united to Judas Iscariot by that phrase of Joan's on the way to the scaffold: "Bishop, I die through you."

She was imprisoned at Rouen in an iron cage to which she was fastened by the neck, hands, and feet. But after her trial began, a big chain round her waist fastened her by night to her bed. Five coarse men-at-arms never left her, and frequently were insulting, even by night, prophesying the fate which the Inquisition had in store for her.

At her interrogations, confronted by the brutal bishop and by the cunning ecclesiastics, it is impossible to sufficiently admire the modesty, the enthusiasm, and the ready wit with which this isolated peasant girl of twenty defended herself.

"I come from God. I have nothing to do here. Send me back to God who sent me," was one enthusiastic cry.

"You say you are my judge; think well what you do, for truly I am sent from God. Therefore you place yourself in great danger."

On the second day, when bidden to take the oath, she answered: "I took it yesterday: that ought to suffice: you press me too closely;" and later, "You wish me to speak against myself," was her simple way of checking an intricate cross-examination.

"What do your 'voices' tell you?"

"Yesterday they spoke three times; to-day even here they say the same: 'Reply boldly, show a firm front, God will help you!'"

"Do you know if you are in a state of grace?"

"If I am not, God put me in it; if I am, God maintain me! I should be the most desolate in the world if I knew I was not in the grace of God. But if I were in a state of sin, I believe the voice would

not reach me, and I wish that every one else understood that as well as I do."

For four hours at a time she was overwhelmed with questions, sometimes several at once, often on most intricate theological points. Her patriotism was undaunted, and she foretold the coming liberation of her country. Asked what sign she gave the King that she came from God, she replied: "I have told you I will not reveal the secrets of my King. Go and ask him for them."

Asked if she would escape: "I firmly believe that if I saw the door opened and my keepers knew not how to prevent me, it would be my dismissal, and that Our Saviour was sending me succour. But without that dismissal I should not go without first endeavouring to see if Our Lord would be pleased. Help yourself, and God will help you."

Asked if God were on the side of the English at the time of their prosperity in France, she said: "I do not know if God hated the French; but I know He permitted them to be beaten for their sins, if they were beaten."

To the inquiry why her standard was taken to the Cathedral of Rheims rather than those of the other leaders: "It had borne the brunt, it was right it should have the honour," was her splendid answer.

When her appeal to the Pope was refused she fell ill, and on her recovery ascribed it to a carp sent to her by the Bishop of Beauvais, arousing the usual mediæval suspicion of poisoning. Eventually she was induced to sign an abjuration, after which there was a second form of trial to prove she had relapsed.

On May 30, 1430, she was told she was to be burnt. Having received the sacrament, she uttered her condemnation of Cauchon, and when he lamely

excused himself: "That is why I appeal from you to God," was her answer.

"Where shall I be to-day?" she asked a priest.

"Have you not firm hope in the Saviour?"

"Yes, with God's help I shall be in Paradise."

Dressed in female attire, she was taken in a cart, escorted by eight hundred soldiers, to the scaffold. After a sermon, she prayed, forgiving all her foes, and at the end affirming that the King was innocent, even if she herself was guilty.

Not one blow had the King or France struck for that girl who had been the national saviour.

Devoutly Joan kissed a cross which an Englishman had made with two bits of wood, and fervently placed it on her bosom beneath her dress. When the executioner loitered, some English officer cried: "Hullo, priests, are you going to make us dine here?"

"Ah, Rouen, Rouen! you are my last home!" ejaculated Joan. On her head was put a mitre with the words "heretic, recusant, apostate, idolator," and she was fastened to an iron stake in the pyre. As the wood was set alight she cried "Jesus" loudly, and when Brother Ladvenn was heroically inciting her, she bade him step out of reach of the flames but to hold up the cross so that she might gaze on it. She persisted in saying that her "voices" came from God, and then: "Ah! Rouen, I fear that you will have to suffer for my death."

Her agony was prolonged owing to the great height of the scaffold. The modesty of the girl was beautifully shown even in her sufferings; for as her clothes were burnt before her body, when she was naked in the flames her hands instinctively sought to cover herself. Again and again she uttered the name of Jesus, until her soul was delivered from torture.

An English secretary exclaimed as he turned away: "We are all lost; we have burnt a saint."

All praise of Joan must be superfluous. Only need be added this phrase of M. de Gery, the Bishop of Orleans, in his panegyric in 1779: "By her, France escaped the religious schism in which she would have been involved had she been allied with England."

Anderson

ST. TERESA

FROM THE SCULPTURE BY BERNINI IN THE CHURCH OF S. MARIA DELLA VITTORIA, ROME

SAINT TERESA

1515–1582

THERE are no exceptions. St. Teresa furnishes an example. It is the customary impression that she is one of the most abnormal and ecstatic saints. In reality she is the typical feminine representative of Spain—of which nation she is the patron saint. To treat her as some one apart is utterly to misunderstand her. She is womanly, passionate with all the imaginativeness of her nationality, and as practical in the re-constitution of her order as any French housewife in the management of her household.

Avila, her birthplace, poised where mountains survey a big expanse, was known as Avila of the Knights. On one occasion when the men folk were away fighting, the women actually withstood a siege and valiantly manned the walls. Their heroic leader, as a reward, demanded that women should thenceforth have a vote and a voice in the management of the affairs of the town. Such an incident must often have been told to the child Teresa, especially as her mother delighted in reading books on chivalry, which soothed her in pain, but which the saint morbidly imagined had hurt her considerably, because they distracted her youthful thoughts from devotion.

"I had a father and mother who were devout and loved God,"[1] are the opening words of the auto-

[1] *Life of St. Teresa*, written by herself, translated by David Lewis, London, 3rd edition, 1904, p. 2.

biography she wrote at clerical instigation. It is worth mentioning that the Inquisition took thirteen years to pronounce on the orthodoxy of this Life by the greatest Spanish devotee.[1] She came of a fairly illustrious family, de Cepeda,[2] and in her pious but prosperous home life there was nothing of a momentous character except the loss of her mother, who had worn the apparel of a woman advanced in years before she died at the age of thirty-three.

The Spanish are a grave and sober people, imbued with fixed religious opinions so dominant that they affect every phase of their art and literature.[3] An imaginative child can among them soon realize that the things not seen are eternal. All her life, death played a tremendous part in the thoughts of Teresa, as it does with all Spaniards, and the after-existence seemed to preoccupy her to a degree rare in the experience of those unaccustomed to the mental atmosphere of the peninsula. One of her earliest recollections is that she was puzzled by eternity, and would repeat "for ever, ever, ever" again and again.[4] At the age of seven she set out, with a brother aged eleven, in order to meet the Moors, and by obtaining martyrdom at their hands to take a short cut to immortality. In this naïve design they were frustrated by an uncle, who met them on the road and brought them back to Avila.[5] In no way discouraged, the children now set to work to construct hermitages in the garden, but as these were composed of small

[1] *Santa Teresa*, Gabriela Cunninghame Graham, London, 1894, vol. i., p. 65.

[2] *Sainte Thérèse*, Henri Joly, Paris, 1902, p. 1.

[3] *Anglican Innocents in Spain*, F. E. Sidney, London, 1903, p. 33.

[4] Her own Life, *supra*, p. 4.

[5] Ribera, *Vie de St. Thérèse*, Paris, two vols., Lib. i., chap. iv.

stones they fell down immediately. It is the saint who tells us this.[1]

There was a period (about eighteen months) of upbringing—it can hardly be called education—in a convent, and then a frivolous friendship with an elder sister which caused her much subsequent compunction. "Our Lord always kept me from seeking to be loved by men," she explains. She was again at home after an illness, and eventually decided on a devout life. "Though I could not bend my will to be a nun, I saw the religious state was the best and safest"; and again—showing the characteristic already alluded to—"it is not much to spend the rest of my life as if I were in purgatory and then go straight to heaven." So, with a brother, she left her father's house, feeling "as though all my bones were being torn apart," and the parent following after her yielded his consent and "offered up his Isaac on Mount Carmel,"[2] as the chronicler has it.

One who personally knew Teresa has left this word portrait:

> "She was of a good height. Of remarkable beauty in her youth, she still looked to advantage at an advanced age. She was corpulent, with a very white skin. Her face was round and full, finely cut, and well proportioned. The complexion was of lilies and roses; it became inflamed when she was in orison, which gave her a ravishing beauty. Her face was ineffably limpid, and breathed a celestial peace. Her hair was black and curly; her brow large and handsome. Chestnut eyebrows rather bushy and arched; her eyes black and round, of ordinary size; when she smiled cheer-

[1] Her own Life, *supra*, p. 5.
[2] *Reforma*, Lib. i., chap. viii., sect. 5.

fulness was depicted, and they breathed gravity when she wished to be grave; her nose was small, a little raised at the middle, round at the bottom and a little inclined down; her nostrils, *en arcade*, were small; her mouth neither large nor small, the lower lip large and rather hanging; her teeth were good; her chin well made and proportioned; her ears neither small nor big; the neck large and short; small and very beautiful hands. On the left side of her face she had three little blemishes which became her: all appeared perfect in her. Her demeanour was majestic, her deportment full of dignity and grace; she was so amiable and so calm that it sufficed to see and to hear her to be inspired with respect and love for her."[1]

Her health was never good, and this reacted much on a naturally over-active imagination. Illnesses succeeded one another, the worst lasting for three years and being attributed to paralysis.[2] Yet like so many who are delicate early in life, she attained a good age, sixty-seven, and, despite austerities, grew less disposed to maladies when more occupied by the affairs of her order. She relates that wishing to read the life of a saint, she read the same lines four or five times without any meaning being conveyed to her mind, and that this happened several times.[3] Of course, this phase is familiar to physicians, and she was often the subject of hysteria.

"I did not know how to make my prayer or to recollect myself. . . . It was the most painful life that could be imagined, because I had no sweetness in

[1] Ribera, *supra*, Lib. ii. chap. i.

[2] Bolland, n. 100, 101.

[3] *Psychology of Saints*, by H. Joly; translated by G. Tyrell, London, 1898.

God." From this starting point she came to be the typical Quietist of conventual Spain, and some of her own phrases best give her views[1] :—

> "The prayer of Quiet is a little spark of the true love of Himself. It is a suspension of the understanding. In a state of prayer so high as this, the soul understands that God is doing His work without any fatigue of the understanding. The soul is to abandon itself into the arms of God altogether. If He will take it to Heaven, let it go; if to Hell, no matter, as it is going thither with its sovereign Good. The soul no longer belongs to itself, it has been given utterly to our Lord, let it cast all care utterly away. My soul longs to be free—eating is killing it and sleep is wearisome; it seems to live contrary to nature, for now it desires to live not in itself but in Thee. There is no sense of anything but fruition. The soul is conscious with a joy excessive and sweet that it is, as it were, utterly fainting away in a kind of trance; breathing and all the bodily strength fail it so that it cannot even move the hands without great pain. The senses are of no use whatever except to hinder the soul's function."

From this it was only a step to the visions she long mistrusted, partly through lack of guidance, and partly because of the prevalence at the time of false mystics. Unquestionably the physical phenomena appeared to her as an inevitable episode between the efforts of growing orison and the enjoyment of spiritual gifts coming from without her to transform all her being.[2] Of the visions, more celebrated than the one in which

[1] Her own Life, *supra*, chap. iv. sec. 8; xv. sec. 6; xvi. sec. 8; xvii. sec. 1; xviii. secs. 1, 14, *inter alia*, are here quoted from.

[2] *Sainte Thérèse*, H. Joly, *supra*, p. 56.

St. Claire promised her support, is the one in 1559 of which she gave this account :—

"Here is a vision with which the Saviour deigned to favour me at times. I saw an angel close by me on my left side, in bodily form. This I am not accustomed to see, unless very rarely. Though I have visions of angels frequently, yet I see them only by an intellectual vision such as I have spoken of before. It was our Lord's will that in this vision I should see the angel in this wise. He was not large but small of stature, and most beautiful—his face burning as if he were one of the highest angels, who seem to be all fire. I saw in his hand a long spear of gold, and at the iron's point there seemed to be a little fire. He appeared to me to be thrusting it at times into my heart and to pierce my very entrails; when he drew it out, he seemed to draw them also and to leave me all on fire with a great love of God. The pain was so great that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain that I could not wish to be rid of it. It is a caressing of love so sweet which now takes place between the soul and God, that I pray God of His goodness to make him who may think I am lying experience it. I wished to see no one, but to cherish my pain which was to me a greater bliss than all created things could give me."[1]

Her transfixed heart with the mark of a piercing through it is a matter of belief among many devout in succeeding generations, and people have testified to seeing it after her death, swearing to this as a physical fact although it would be medically impossible.

Even before this experience she had given her

[1] Her own Life, *supra*, chap. xxix. secs. 16, 17.

culminating confession, "in the beginning I did not know God was in all things,"[1] and thus she anticipates the last of the Quietists, Madame de Guyon, who declared "God is more in us than we ourselves." Self-annihilation was the key to this doctrine, as it was that of Eckhardt,[2] who taught that God alone exists and that the world has no reality in itself, for God is all and matter nothing, and the soul must plunge into utter nothingness.

This goes further than Christianity, for all these phrases, like those of other Quietists such as Suso and Mechtild of Magdeburg—the woman of high birth filled with an absorbing wish to be disgraced without sin before the world[3]—tend back to Bhuddhism. In 1339 three Beghards, arrested at Constance, affirmed there was as much divinity in the vilest insect as in man. Abbé Havelin has defined mysticism as the love of God; but the God of the Quietists, in His increasing universalism, seems to be beyond that of Christianity.

To what Teresa—tossed among confessors following different tactics—might have attained, it is difficult to say. She came under the eminently utilitarian and sagacious counsels of the Jesuits, and it was one of them, Padranos, who gave the restless energy of her brain an outlet in maceration. The tin shirt pierced with holes, like a grater, next her skin, the bed of

[1] Her own Life, *supra*, chap. xviii. sec. 21.

[2] His pupil Katrei is recorded to have said: "Now, I am God," and at last when people thought her dead and laid her on a bier, Eckhardt saw she was still alive. She declared herself satisfied. She would have permitted herself to be buried alive.

[3] Fleeing from her family, and denied admission at every convent, she stood in the street alone. Then she believed God had meant her to renounce her pride and to become a Beguine, the term of contempt for the lowliest. She entered the almshouse of the poor "and sank unconscious into the ever-present arms of God." Reference must be made to Madame Darmesteter's *End of the Middle Ages*, London, 1888, for the best available account in the English language of the Beguines.

briars on which she rolled with delight as though it were roses, the scourgings with nettles or with keys till the walls were splashed with her blood—these things were sharp physical medicine to her mental state, bracing her and bringing her at an age long past forty to undertake the reform of her order.

It was notable that the Jesuits had a practical distrust of all mysticism, which may be regarded as the Christianized form of neo-Platonism. They were suspicious of mental ebullitions of spirituality; consequently, the genius of Teresa must have commended itself to them more on its practical than on its mystic side. Doubtless they applauded her reforming activities, and may in some cases have suggested them; but in general what she did had its origin in her own remarkable personality.

It seems to have been a realistic vision of hell which set her to reform the Carmelites—the austere order that traces its foundation to Elisha, if not to Enoch. Mitigations had come, but Teresa wanted to establish a practical severity based on extreme poverty. There was always shrewd common sense in her views about everybody except herself, and she may have tempered her opinions to needs of her own of which she was personally conscious. It must not be forgotten that she was far in advance of the science of her day in the way in which she distinguished and analysed the four different kinds of melancholy.[1] Now, in all her dispositions she was practical.

Having seen with horror the difficulty of controlling and keeping absorbed one hundred and forty-eight nuns in the Convent of the Incarnation,[2] she proposed

[1] See an article on "Neurasthénie" in *Quinzaine*, Paris, Feb. 1, 1897.

[2] "Let parents marry their daughters to persons of a much lower degree rather than place them in monasteries of this kind" (Her own Life, *supra*, chap. vii. sec. 7).

to have only thirteen in each of her convents, a number raised to twenty-one for the purposes of better interpretation of the divine office. The first thing she sought was straw, so that there might be material for beds.

Reduced on one occasion to some dry figs, she observed: "Console yourselves, my daughters, many poor folk have not so much."

To a priest recommending a novice reported to possess angelic piety, Teresa answered: "You see, father, even though our Lord should give this girl devotion and teach her contemplation while with us, nevertheless, if she has no sense, she will never come to have any, and then, instead of being of use to the community, she will always be a burden."[1]

It is for that and such like and not for her passionate mysticism—which gave spiritual expression to the fierce Spanish emotions—that Teresa appeals to us. Notable, too, is her humility. When she was chosen prioress of her convent, and the nuns were assembled, she seated herself on a low stool below a statue of the Virgin.[2] We admire, also, her truly Spanish dislike of fear. Her later years were devoted in great part to travelling from one of her foundations to another through dangerous places, but when her companions were terrified she was ever undaunted. There was in her shrewdness and a spice of fun. "I laugh," "I smile," are frequent phrases in her letters and writings. Here is an example of her common sense way of putting a devotional argument:

> "In the soul Martha and Mary do not try to supplement each other, for the soul knows it ought not to desire to be Mary until it has laboured with Martha."

[1] *Life of St. Teresa according to the Bollandists*, Paris, vol. ii., p. 408.

[2] *Life of St. Teresa*, edited by the Archbishop of Westminster, London, 1865, p. 223.

There are always affinities, as much in spiritual as in secular history. Teresa and St. John of the Cross were the affinities of the reformed Carmelites. Both were visionaries, but whilst he dwells on the desolation of spiritual craving, she lays stress on the delights of mysticism. Yet her passionate expressions for the Deity which received expression in such boldly sensuous language were not appreciated by priests cognizant of the danger of enthusiasm lapsing into heresy. But her docile temperament was not thus tempted, and on her death-bed Teresa truly called herself "a child of the Church."

Her great vow, in everything to do what appeared to her the most perfect and the most agreeable to God, came before she undertook that reorganization which has left an indelible impression on the subsequent religious life of her country, which is one prone to gloom—hence the gravity of treatment always present in its art.

Teresa was in more than one way ahead of her times, notably when she gives such advice as, "Let her go and breathe country air"; but she was for the most part a woman of her epoch, believing in the temptations of demons and the efficacy of charms—recollect how she induced the priest to give up an amulet she fancied enchanted him to a woman in his congregation, and caused it to be thrown into the river, and how she herself ascribed her own fall down the steps of the chancel in the Christmas festival of 1577, when she broke her arms, to the agency of the devil. "Demons seem to play at ball with the soul, and love is cold and faith is dead and asleep," she observed in mournful tones. Yet—apparent contradiction which is none—"she seemed to live with

Christ,"[1] for God is pleased to manifest Himself in sundry ways and in divers places.

Her assiduous practical labours calmed her mental stress, and she brought the same earnestness to her organizing work as she had shown in the cultivation of the garden of her own soul. She had that control over her spiritual daughters that is noticeable in all devotional leaders.

"My son, when I was young I was told I was beautiful, and I believed it; later on I was told I was wise, and I believed that too, far too readily. I have often had to accuse myself in confession of those vanities,"—in that there is the human note which is rarely absent from the utterances of Teresa. Again, it is characteristic that she could never tolerate dirt. "Her soul was so pure that she could not bear anything that was not clean," is the semi-apologetic explanation of this apparent vanity in a mortified saint given in one devout biography.[2] In her penances we are told "she would have torn herself to pieces had God permitted it." When travelling she loved to be taken for a poor woman—which was strictly accurate, for none of her sex has more thoroughly practised poverty.

Her last years were clouded by disputes in which her niece and a lawyer took a leading part, while among other sufferings her arm was twice broken. On her death-bed, when asked where she would be buried, she replied:

> "Is it for me to occupy myself with such things? Shall I not out of charity be given a corner of the earth?"

Those about her bed declared she seemed astonished

[1] Mrs. Cunninghame Graham, *supra*, p. 51.

[2] *Vie de Sainte Thérèse*, Mère Anne de St. Bartolomé, Brussels, 1708, p. 40.

and enraptured in her last vision, and at the Sacrament she joyfully cried: "Saviour, it is time for us to meet."

Her spiritual testament is in some degree contained in these few lines, addressed to certain of her community:

> "My daughters, on leaving this house I am well consoled by the perfection and the poverty I see, as well as by your mutual charity. Do not accomplish your exercises by rote, but make heroic acts which day by day become more meritorious. Strive to have great desires; precious fruit results even when they cannot be carried into execution."

After the iconoclastic fashion of to-day, a priest[1] has recently challenged the authenticity of her motto, "Either die or suffer"; but it is so appropriate to her life in its successive stages of spiritual, bodily, and philanthropic combat that it will never fail to be associated with this illustrious daughter of Carmel and of Spain.

[1] Father Gregory, of St. Joseph.

WOMEN OF THE RENAISSANCE

THE writer of a recent work on the present subject,[1] in a terse preface, remarks that it must always be with diffidence that any one puts forth a volume on such a well-worn epoch as that of the Renaissance. To omit a chapter on the subject in any volume dealing historically with women would of course be impossible; but to write anything new and definitive about it is equally impossible. The author, when delivering a course of lectures at a ladies' school, was asked to speak on the subject, and he did his best. Yet what was he to say? The fact is that in the Renaissance the personality of women was as yet nebulous. The author asserts this deliberately, in spite of the tragic, the gracious, the attractive, and the interesting women who play their part in its drama. It is more difficult to visualize a famous woman of the Renaissance, more difficult to grasp her individuality, than in most other periods of which we have knowledge.

This is, of course, not the common view, but it is one which must more and more commend itself to diligent students of the period. As we shall show a few pages later on, in Venice woman was of scanty importance because Venice was an empire. We might go so far as to assert that in Venice woman occupied a negligible position during the very period

[1] Mrs. Maud F. Jerrold, *Vittoria Colonna*, London, December, 1906.

when the City of the Lagoons was the pleasure resort of Europe. In Milan, under the tyrant Sforzas, woman had no place at all; in Rome the Cardinals, with their fine sense of aesthetic fitness, accorded more appreciation to the minds of women. It was better in Florence; it was more tolerable at Naples.

Yet a historical fact of the Renaissance, so far as it has to be dealt with here, is that whilst the individual man was discovered in the period, the woman was not. Ariosto, in *Orlando Furioso*, saw women in mid-air, not as gracious partners dancing life's measure, and he never suggested in romance perfection he had not found in fact.[1] Moreover, he did not marry Alessandra Strozzi until he was forty-seven. Bradamante was his ideal feminine creation; in her he drew submission to parents and loyalty to Ruggiero; yet she was a virago. The cardinal virtue which in his eyes a woman could possess was self-devotion—not the virtue of the woman with the broad mind and far-seeing grasp of a situation, who will voluntarily sacrifice herself from sheer nobility, but the virtue of one contented to prostrate herself for the sake of the superior male sex. Much of Dante's inspiration is due to his devotion to Beatrice. Yet it is a matter of scholarly dispute if he ever spoke to her. Certainly what moved him was no real Beatrice, but the idealized spirituality with which he invested her. In *Don Quixote*—that great epic of the Renaissance—the women are nonentities. Benvenuto Cellini shows in his spirited memoirs how slight a part they play. It must not be forgotten that Petrarch's Laura was a Frenchwoman who was married and had eleven children. Boccaccio, in *De Claris Mulieribus*, deals

[1] J. A. Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy: Italian Literature*, part ii., p. 33, London, 1898.

almost exclusively with antiquity, ninety-seven of his women belonging to early times, and only seven to the Middle Ages, among them being the fabulous Pope Joan and Queen Joanna of Naples. This latter sovereign was four times married, and there is grave reason to believe she assisted in the demise of at least one of her husbands. Eventually she was smothered under a mattress after a life exceptionally full of crime and violence.

It was not the revival of antiquity alone, but its union with the genius of the Italian people, which made a conquest of the western world—this is the verdict of the most profound German authority on the subject.[1] When he adds that Italy was the first among modern nations by whom the outward world was seen and felt as something beautiful, we obtain a suggestion of the channel by which woman glided towards recognition, for appreciation is a feminine attribute of no mean value. Yet it was not until the Renaissance reached France that women dominated it—women in some cases from Italy. In that peninsula itself women were, for the most part, in art painted for their bodily beauty, not for their spiritual individuality. As in all other times, the very honest women have no history; it is those who deviate from dull mediocrity, either through vice or ambition or some other powerful motive, that arrest attention and are remembered by posterity.

The intellectual giants of the Renaissance were conscious of no sin, whilst acutely distinguishing between good and evil. The keynote of the Renaissance is egoism, the excessive individualism of the

[1] J. Burckhardt in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, of which the best English translation is that of S. G. C. Middlemore, London, 1890 (*vide* pp. 171 and 298).

male. Female egoism existed too, but at first as a pale and imitative reflection. So far as the morality of social life was concerned, it was only when under Spanish influence that Italy became generally conscious of the passion of jealousy;[1] before that there was too often a careless tolerance of much that is forbidden.

Venice, to which allusion has just been made, may be first dealt with. It was to the Middle Ages what Paris is to-day; and its carnival was famous all over Europe. There were eleven thousand women of easy virtue in the city,[2] and churches, which used to be open at night, had to be shut owing to the improper use made of the sacred buildings. Yet testimony is borne to the chastity of the Venetian women;[3] those of light character coming mainly from Germany, a fact which is also noticeable in Paris to-day.

The calmness of the faces of Venetian women in pictures is remarkable; it is that of unstirred depths. As a proof of how little women stood for in Venice until the seventeenth century, may be cited the fact that they appeared only at pageants or at such functions as weddings and funerals. The very large number of churches and convents proves how much time the sex had to devote to prayer and to celibacy or widowhood. The lives of the married women were largely composed of the sadness of farewell, the anxiety of waiting, and the joy over the return[4] of the adventurous husbands who had sailed down the Adriatic or gone westward on martial adventure. It is a curious fact that until the seventeenth century, in all the

[1] J. Burckhardt, *vide supra*, p. 495.

[2] *Diarii* of Priuli.

[3] *De Exemp. iii. Vir.*, by Egnatius, Venice, fol. 212.

[4] *La Vie Privée à Venise*, P. G. Molmenti, Venice, 1882, p. 116.

Venetian embassies, which were of such great importance, the presence or absence of the ambassadress is never once mentioned.[1] No female interest was ever shown in public affairs. In all the course of years we barely hear of the beauty of Catherine Cornaro; that Cassandra Fedeli was retained at Venice after she had completed notable studies at Padua, although invited to their courts by Leo X, Louis XII, and Isabella of Castille; while we learn that Henry III of France bequeathed to Veronica Franco in 1553 "a good feather bed for which she may have great need but which she must not sell, pawn, or give to the Jews."[2]

For the rest, it is all generalities and sumptuary edicts. Their nearest relatives might not see Venetian girls of noble rank,[3] but as soon as they were married these ladies hired a dancing master, learnt to curtsey and delivered themselves up to the fascinations of dress.[4] In order to intensify the fairness of their hair, they used to sit on their balconies, letting the sun bleach their tresses for three hours a day,[5] with their heads covered by a *solana*, or circular headpiece with an open crown.[6] On Ascension Day, walking on pattens sometimes two feet high, they crowded to the Merceraria to see the famous doll which was annually dressed in the last Parisian fashion. The Council ordered that no trousseau should exceed a certain sum, and forbade a lady to possess more than two pelisses and one double cloak

[1] *La Vie d'Un Patricien de Venise*, C. Yriarte, Paris, 1874.

[2] *Lettere di Donne Italiane del sec. xvi.*: ed. Gamb., Venice, 1832, p. 209.

[3] *Raggionamenti*, by Cesare Vecellio.

[4] *Degli Habili antichi e moderni*, Venice, 1690.

[5] *La Matitie della Donne* (Anon.), Venice, end of fifteenth century.

[6] *Doneschi et Difelli*, by Giuseppi Passi, Bibl. S. Marc de Venise.

of taffetas.[1] Needless to say, it was impossible to carry out such instructions, and when the Patriarch Giustiniani forbade luxurious adornments, an appeal was successfully made to the Pope. John Villani reproaches women for "ornaments of crowns and garlands of gold, silver, and precious stones, head-dresses of pearls and clothes made of several materials, sheets hemmed with silk and ornaments of pearls worn on the bosom."[2] Engaged girls wore a crown of rich jewels with their hair loose on their shoulders,[3] and brides donned a little velvet bonnet. The splendour of display was at weddings and funerals, *festa* to which Venetians lent themselves with enthusiasm.

It must not be forgotten that East met West at Venice, where baptism was by immersion and communion was taken in both kinds, whilst two Masses could not be said on the same day at the same altar.[4] Greek princesses, who had married Doges, brought Byzantine customs, and caused Venetian ladies to be enveloped in almost Oriental seclusion until the seventeenth century. The wife of Doge Dominic was a daughter of Constantine, Emperor of Constantinople. She washed only in perfumed waters, drenched her body with perfumes, and the little golden sticks with which she carried her food to her mouth are probably some of the most notable precursors of our modern table utensils. Slavery abounded, and perhaps our only fragrant memory of these Venetian ladies is their ardent love of flowers.

An eloquent Frenchman has latterly reincarnated the woman of the Renaissance, enthusiastically ex-

[1] *Archi di stato* 1299, 2 Mai, M. C. Fructus, c 194.
[2] Rec. Rossi, vol. iii.
[3] *Habiti Venetia*, 1610, by Franco, p. 7, quoted by Molmenti.
[4] Gallicciolli, vol. iii., pp. 3, 6, 8.

torting the secret of her influence in the period.[1] As true a knight to the ladies as any who ever couched lance in a tournament, he recalls the admonition to Francis I by that monarch's tutor, Francois de Moulins: "Never forget that woman came from Adam's side, not from his feet"; and adds from Castiglione: "Man has for his portion physical strength: all doing must be his; all inspiration must come from woman."[2]

Here is a great truth, for the influence of woman comes from her spiritualization of society, and this was only beginning in the Renaissance, which was a period of transition from those Middle Ages in which it was the fashion to profess the worship of woman, but in which she was treated like a dog, except in those instances in which she possessed the force of character necessary to command respect. In the Renaissance much that was said by men to women was flattery, and yet Castiglione's phrase must be handed down:

> "Without women nothing is possible, either in military courage, or art, or poetry, or music, or philosophy, or even religion. God is truly seen only through them."

This is so obvious that most of the world has not yet seen it. Such recognition of truth in the Renaissance merits our respect—much as we lament that in the ensuing centuries it has not become more general.

In the Renaissance, as at all times, marriage is the business of honourable women. Betrothals of princesses often took place when they were two days old:

[1] *Les Femmes de la Renaissance*, by R. de Maulde la Clavière, Paris, 1898. An excellent translation by G. H. Ely was published in London in 1900.

[2] *The Courtier*, by Castiglione. Hoby put this into admirable English. See the *Tudor Translations*, edited by Henley.

nuptials were consummated at the age of twelve, and at sixteen to be unmarried was a catastrophe for any Italian girl. An erudite sage proposed that after that age the State should provide husbands according to the proposals of Plato.[1] Michelangelo, who did not practise what he preached, observed that to wed a good, well-bred, healthy woman was to do a good day's work. Marriage, even though celebrated with pomp, was a prosaic, passionless affair, a matter for philosophical acquiescence rather than joy:

> "Marriage should not admit of any objective either of pleasure or of self-interest; all the same it is not a perfect state; let us be satisfied with wisely accepting it for what it is, a makeshift but reputable."[2]

Yet for the bride it meant an immense advance; for the groom it was a matter of business with the possibility of becoming the laughing-stock of his friends. The married man is the only butt of mediæval fiction.

Women had great faith in their own sex. They went to women to consult them about maladies,[3] and one eminent physician, Portesii, dedicated a medical work to Diana of Poitiers as to a colleague. But medicine soon lapsed into quackery, and in superstition women have always been specially expert. Catherine Sforza, that feminine diplomatist, spent hours in her laboratory: once with a Jewess who brought her an universal unguent; once to verify a magnet intended to compose family squabbles. As for the precocious learning of

[1] *La Nef des Princes*, Symphorien Champier, second ed., Paris, 1525.

[2] *Heptameron of Margaret, Queen of Navarre*, Tale 40.

[3] "*C'est le tord qu'qujourd huy se font les femmes trop timides, qui plus tost ont recours aux autres femmes*" (*Le Livre de la Generation d'homme*, by Guill. Chrestien, Paris, 1559).

some of the feminine products of the Renaissance, it may suffice to recall—*inter alia*—that Lady Jane Grey read Plato at thirteen, that at a year older Elizabeth translated a work of Margaret of France, and that Olympia Morata delivered eloquent discourses in Latin and Greek before she was fifteen, and that later her pupils under fifteen acted a comedy by Terence before the Pope. Saturated with history[1] and ethics, filled with extracts from Xenophon and Seneca, girls emerged mentally armed for the struggle of sex—for the husband was feared. Let it be added that they knew how to cook.

The result of the Renaissance education was not only to stimulate greater freedom of thought, but actually to postpone the age of marriage, which Lycurgus had said should be at twenty, but which Margaret declared should be thirty-seven. Older men were scandalized at the freedom of girls with their tutors. The study of classics had insensibly led to general liberty, and the Renaissance in its social aspect might appear to be an awakening to the full right to flirt, to receive ballads, to keep trysts, and to please oneself even with undue levity.

> Some maidens in their modest way
> With fools their garters stake at play.[2]

Yet all this readjustment of the relations of the sexes did not make matrimony more a matter of affection. Wives were not disturbed by their husband's female slaves; the grave Cosimo Medici, although married, would have been amazed had his wife objected to the beautiful Circassian being the mother of his son Charles. Yet if it was fashionable to

[1] "From a mule that brays and a girl who speaks Latin, deliver us good Lord" (*Les Femmes de Brantome*, by Bouchot, Paris).

[2] *Epistles Morales*, by Jean Bouchet, Paris, 1545, fo. 27, v°.

detest marriage as a yoke which it was incumbent to bend under, there was exaggerated mourning among widows. But for religious scruples, Isabella Rechisentia would have killed herself on the body of Raymond de Cordona;[1] Vittoria Colonna professed herself in hundreds of sonnets inconsolable for the loss of her husband—"who seems dead to you is not dead to me"; but Mary Tudor, having gone through the ordeal incumbent on each widowed Queen of France of sitting for six weeks in a room artificially lighted, walked out of it to marry Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk.

One sign of the power of women of that time was the way in which widows managed their estates and affairs. For instance, Charlotte d'Albret did not disdain usury,[2] and Frances d'Amboise organized an expedition and ruined her adversaries. In Italy the freedom of the austere widowhood of Vittoria Colonna was succeeded in France by that of many enjoying a more agreeable liberty, forming a chain which stretched through the generations of the women of the *salons* to our own time when the *salons* are no more.

The widows of the Renaissance did not, in the enormous majority of cases, want to re-marry. Among these ladies one characteristic was absolute sincerity, and that was well suited to a position in life in which they were answerable to no one. Hypocrisy was the bugbear of the sixteenth century, and decidedly delicacy was not its salient feature. The great vitality of these women, the fact that their beauty lasted later in life than had been the case in preceding generations, may have contributed towards the fact that the noblest conduct and the finest sentiments were found to be

[1] *De Amore*, A. Niphus, Rome, 1531, chap. cii.
[2] de Maulde La Clavière, *vide supra*, p. 183.

compatible with the lowest morals. It is noteworthy that these women gloried in their sex, and of them all perhaps Louise of Savoy is the only one who regretted she was not a man.

But there is also this remarkable point to be noticed: that the daughters of these great women of the Renaissance did not care for their mothers. Girls had no place in the society of that time unless they were in waiting on queens or duchesses. To open the portals of life a girl had to be married. When Platonism was embraced by the Florentines, women were at once recognized as forming part of what was one long procession of the affections. Castiglione's aphorism which I have just quoted, "God is truly seen only through women," became as nothing beside the ardour of Bembo, who believed true love to be disinterested love inspired in man by woman. The true modern Platonism, in revolt against the asceticism of the earlier Christian centuries, was thundered by Michelangelo: "If every one of our affections is displeasing to Heaven, to what end would God have created the world?"

Virtually Platonism grew into an intellectual union, of which a courtesan, Tullia d'Aragona, became the Aspasia, exercising enormous influence through her book *On the Infinity of Love*. On her visit to Florence in 1535 she was excused from wearing the statutory yellow veil because so distinguished a follower of the Muses and of Plato ought not to be submitted to the ordinary police regulations. When this priestess of the Humanists reached Ferrara, the representative of Mantua at that Court wrote to Isabella d'Este:

"I have to record the arrival amongst us of a gentle lady, so modest in behaviour, so fascinating

in manners, that we cannot help considering her something divine; she sings *impromptu* all kinds of airs and motets; she keeps herself in touch with the events of the day, and we cannot suggest a subject with which she does not appear conversant. There is not one lady in Ferrara, not even the Duchess of Pescara (Vittoria Colonna) that can stand comparison with Tullia."[1]

The charm of Tullia may have already been what was soon the secret of the influence of all the women embracing Platonism, namely, that they were not labouring for their personal happiness, which for the most part they did not expect to obtain; but being weary of what life could give, they were sowing what proved to be the seeds of modern society. Individualism in woman was not yet found, but already women had a collective object, and that a charitable one—namely, to minister to the crying needs of human hearts.

Narrow prejudices were broken down. Whilst some were enjoying mental relief, the majority simply grasped at liberty. Freedom of manners could not become gross under Italian or French ladies as it would among the coarser Germans; and even in those days in Italy anything filthy was called German.[2] The bed and the bath were the two places of reception. Washes, paints, dyes, and massage were part of the feminine stock-in-trade.

> Washed of her paint, of her vices bereft,
> Body and soul there is nought of her left.

[1] *The Golden Days of the Renaissance in Rome*, by Rodolfo Lanciani, London, 1906, p. 64.

[2] *Vide* Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, part v., ch. 2. He derives this information from G. B. Giraldi's *Hecatommithi*.

So flow Ronsard's biting lines, a couplet as venomous as any penned by Pope. The satirist and the libertine were bound to tread on the heels of such new liberty of sex as was now proclaimed. Dancing had always been a mediæval pastime, but now there was the Platonic dancing, smooth, graceful, to delicious rhythms, executed barefooted, clad in light drapery, on soft green lawns. Small wonder that kissing became so general that at the fête given by Francisco Bernardo Visconti in honour of Louis XII at Milan in 1499, he kissed every lady of Lombardy at the ball.

Pilgrimages were still frequent, but more than ever it became the fashion to take the waters. Oliver Maillard, a Franciscan friar, thundered out: "Ye women who stew yourselves, I summon you all to the stew-pots of Hell," and Poggio at Baden exclaimed, "Who would not be Platonic, since Plato preaches the community of women?"

Of the arts of the Renaissance, poetry was contemporaneously the one most esteemed. To Margaret of France a library seemed a sanctuary. Castiglione was in the hands of every woman who meditated on the ideal.[1] Boccaccio was the master of fiction, and the *Romaunt of the Rose* was studied and quoted. Music became the breath of the happiness of the time, and was the only art ever depicted in delineations of Heaven. A Neapolitan proverb runs, "Abolish music and we must e'en fall to prayers." The drama reached its zenith at the Vatican under Leo X, though no women as yet appeared on the stage. In painting and sculpture the Renaissance women had only the part of serving as models, and in illustration of their position this may be said: that for the most part, notably in Venice, women

[1] R. de Maulde la Clavière, *vide supra*, p. 362.

were painted with cold, calm countenances,—what life there was being sensual, and what idealizing there was in the artist's conception being sensuous. Titian's women were soulless, those of Correggio more sympathetic. Michelangelo stands apart as a titanic force; and when we meet the tenderness of Raphael, we remember that he never ceased to thank Providence that he had refrained from marrying; and again, that he "was not in a hurry."[1] He died unmarried.

Conversation was as much the high-water mark of woman's influence in the Renaissance as it was later in the *salons*. "With the tongue seven men are not a match for one woman,"[2] and most women of the Renaissance, including Margaret, held sway through conversation. At Urbino and Ferrara were what were virtually Courts of Talk, and necessarily the influence thus exerted was towards refinement and good manners. Sentiment and the emotions were more cultivated in Italy than later in France, where the emotions were more analysed than felt. The softening of the austerity of virtue became part of the mission of these Italian ladies, and some extravagances were perpetrated, whilst at Milan the archbishop suppressed a religious order devoted to the edification of the sexes on the lines of ideal existence.[3] The Renaissance type of beauty may be gathered from the following catalogue to be found "Concerning the Praise and Beauty of Ladies"[4]:—

"Thirty things are required in a lovely woman:
3 things white: skin, teeth, and hands.
3 „ black: eyes, eyebrows, and eyelids.
3 „ red: lips, cheeks, and nails.

[1] *Raphael*, by Muntz, p. 440.
[2] *Colloquia*, Erasmus. [3] *Heptameron*, Tale 30.
[4] Quoted in *Vie Des Dames Galantes*, Brantome, ed. Vigneau, Paris, 1847, p. 148.

3 things long: body, hair, and hands.
3 ,, short: teeth, ears, and feet.
3 ,, broad: bosom, brow, and space between the eyebrows.
3 ,, narrow: mouth, waist, and ankle.
3 ,, large: arm, thigh, and calf.
3 ,, slender: fingers, hair, and lips.
3 ,, small: breasts, nose, and head."

But it is impossible to deny that not only did Bernardino Occhini actually speak in favour of Polygamy in his *Diologi*, but free love really flourished. Some of the noblest ladies styled themselves "Knights of Venus," and were accused of starting bogus lawsuits for the special purpose of corrupting the judges. One respectable mother of seven children, Donna Maria d'Aragona,[1] declared that for experience she had lived three years with her husband as a wife, three as a sweetheart, and three as a foe. In virtue, in vice alike, for women generally the Renaissance meant a dissemination of sensibility. Men may have become weakened and enervated, but the weaker sex gradually raised herself and began to advance towards a recognition to which there had been few sustained parallels since Christianity. One fact is certain, that when the Renaissance was at its zenith, women, who were in the background at its inception, stood on a footing of perfect equality with men.[2]

Among individual women of her time Vittoria Colonna stands foremost. Her fame, which has never been besmirched, has also never been challenged; she is the chief feminine figure of the Italian Renaissance. It would be superfluous here to trace the complicated political situations during her early years.

[1] *Guilia Gonzaga*, by D. B. Amante, Bologna, 1896, p. 190.
[2] *Le Donne Famose*, by Attilio Hortis, Trieste, 1877.

The daughter of Prince Fabrizio, born in 1490, she was betrothed at the age of five to the Marchese di Pescara, and was married to him at the age of nineteen. A recent biographer[1] has testified that up to her nuptials nothing whatever is known of her or her movements, nor do we hear much in the next two quiet years of honeymoon, though it appears that the childless wife could have complained of at least one infidelity on the part of her husband with Delia, a lady in waiting to Isabella d'Este. This may account for the artificial tone of the dreary sequence of sonnets in which she celebrated the devotion of her widowhood. Political exigencies long kept her and her husband apart, and when at thirty-six she was free, there is evidence she contemplated taking the veil. But her talent lay in writing poetry rather than in becoming a nun, and her positive genius for friendship unsullied by the least taint would alone render her remarkable. She can never be separated from Michelangelo, any more than Tasso from Eleonora. They were both middle-aged before they came together in what Roscoe has termed "a sacred affection." Perhaps we find something chilling in the cold perfection which is what we to-day trace in Vittoria Colonna, but there is no doubt that she comforted that rugged seer of art, Michelangelo; and the few specimens of their correspondence make us wish more had been preserved:

"UNIQUE MESSER MICHELANGELO AND MY MOST SINGULAR FRIEND,

"I have received your letter and examined the Crucifixion, which has certainly crucified in

[1] Mrs. Maud F. Jerrold, *Vittoria Colonna*, London, 1906, p. 6.

my mind all other pictures I have ever seen; nor could one find another figure more beautifully designed, more living and more perfectly finished. Truly, I cannot express how subtly and how marvellously it is done. For this reason I have made up my mind that it is from no hand but yours, therefore enlighten me; if it belongs to another I must have patience. If it is yours, I must have it at all costs; but in case it is not yours and you wish to have it copied by your assistant, we will talk it over first. Because, knowing how difficult it would be to imitate it, I could more easily resolve to have some new thing rather than this copied. But if this is really yours, be patient, for I shall never send it back to you. I have examined it carefully in the light, and with a lens and a mirror, and I never saw a more perfect thing.

"Yours to command,

"THE MARCHESA DI PESCARA."[1]

The womanly intuition of Vittoria enabled her to understand profoundly and control safely this fervid infatuation of the old man—an infatuation which found expression in his sonnets. She was his patron and his ideal. Without exercising such fascination as Madame de Récamier exercised many generations later, the Duchess of Pescara possessed a vast influence that arose not from her position but from her personality.

There is really more spontaneity in her enthusiasm for Bembo than for Michelangelo. To Bembo she owed most, and his characteristic sanity found response

[1] *Carteggio raccolto e publicato da E. Ferrero and G. Müller*, second ed., Florence, 1892, Letter CXXIII. Translation by Mrs. Jerrold, *supra*, p. 128.

in her temperament—sympathetic, yet always under control. It is from Castiglione that we learn most of Bembo, and Castiglione submitted the manuscript of *The Courtier* to Vittoria, who not only kept it for months, but freely showed it before returning it with some pretty compliments.

Where she exerted yet more effect was in connection with the Reformation. Unquestionably she never desired to leave the Church of Rome, but she desired reform within it, and had much to do with spreading the doctrines of Juan de Valdés. She closely followed the career of her friend, the headstrong Bernardino Occhini, tried to keep him from a rupture with the Papacy, and signed herself "Your very obedient daughter and disciple." At the Court of Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, not only the truths but the active promoters of the Reformation were made welcome.[1] Renée, who loved to run a tilt against convention, would talk with Ignatius Loyola or with Calvin. She may have lost her head a little, but she enabled Calvin to escape from Ferrara, where he had failed, to Geneva, where he succeeded; and her friendship with Vittoria Colonna brought the latter into the closest touch with all the new thought in religion. It is interesting to recall that in 1536, when she met the Emperor Charles V at Marino, she urged him to undertake a crusade, and herself contemplated a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

Later she stood in Rome as peacemaker between Ascanio Colonna and Pope Paul. When effort was useless she retired to Orvieto, where she was again associated with the reformers congregated round

[1] *Michael Angelo Buonarrotti*, by J. S. Harford, London, 1857, vol. ii., p. 258.

Cardinal Reginald Pole, to whom she became counsellor, thus addressing him—

> "As the intimate friend of the Bridegroom, who will speak to me through you and who calls me to Him, and whose will it is that I should converse on this subject for my own encouragement and consolation."

When he was sent as legate to the Council of Trent, she felt great anxiety lest his enemies should poison him. Soon after his return she passed away. The actual place of her burial long remained doubtful, but her remains are supposed to have been found in the sacristy of San Domenico Maggiore at Naples. On her death-bed she was visited by Michelangelo:

> "He, for his part, loved her so that I remember to have heard him say that he regretted nothing except that, when he went to visit her upon the moment of her passage from this life, he did not kiss her forehead or her face, as he did kiss her hand. Her death was the cause that oftentimes he dwelt astonied, thinking of it even as a man bereft of sense."[1]

Of her writings three excerpts may be given, though they lose some of their nervous individuality in translation. The first has been described as the type of the final prayer of the Renaissance:[2]

> "Grant, I beseech Thee, Lord, that I may always adore Thee with that abasement of soul which befits my humbleness, and with that exalta-

[1] *Condivi*, translated by C. Hare in *The Most Illustrious Ladies of the Italian Renaissance*, London, 1905, p. 306.

[2] R. de Maulde la Clavière, *vide supra*, p. 442.

tion of mind which Thy Majesty demands, and let me ever live in the fear which Thy Justice inspires and in the hope which Thy Mercy allows, and submit to Thee as Almighty, yield myself to Thee as All-wise, and turn to Thee as to supreme Perfection and Goodness. I beseech Thee, most tender Father, that Thy most living fire may purify me, that Thy most clear light may illumine me, and that Thy most pure love may so avail me that, without let or hindrance of mortal things, I may return to Thee in happiness and security."[1]

This is one of her sacred sonnets:[2]

Would that a voice impressive might repeat,
In holiest accents to my inmost soul,
The name of Jesus; and my words and works
Attest true faith in Him, and ardent hope;
The soul elect, which feels within itself
The seeds divine of this celestial love,
Hears, sees, attends on Jesus; Grace from Him
Illumines, expands, purifies the mind;
The habit bright of thus invoking Him,
Exalts our nature so, that it appeals
Daily to Him for its immortal food.
In the last conflict with our ancient foe,
So dire to Nature, armed with Faith alone,
The heart, from usage long, on Him will call.

The most autobiographical sonnet she ever composed runs thus:

Even my serenest days were clouded all
With mists, and so it was that hopes and fears
Held me alternately 'twixt smiles and tears,
And now of sweet, now bitter thoughts the thrall.
Heaven was not then of gifts so prodigal
As sparing of them now, yet the soul would
Endure sheer ill for that imperfect good,
Which in the dear past years did her befall.

[1] MS. in Biblioteca Casuntense, quoted by Visconti, p. 145, translated by Mrs. Jerrold, *vide supra*, p. 294.

[2] Translated by J. S. Harford, *vide supra*, vol. ii. p. 309.

This is the law of that so cruel lord,
Prompt to our hurt and slow to profit us;
Dark days and sunny hours he doth accord.
Devoid of faith and full of falsity,
Trust not the outward show to judge him by,
You who have reached the passage perilous. [1]

Many others of her sex were poets. Veronica Gambara enjoyed a considerable reputation in this respect. She was a friend and correspondent of Vittoria Colonna, and as famous for her classical knowledge and philosophical studies as she was noted for her personal ugliness. She enjoyed the intimacy of Bembo, with whom she was wont to exchange sonnets, and of Isabella d'Este. Her conversational powers as a widow twice attracted the Emperor Charles to her casino, and a new street was specially constructed to increase the stateliness of the approach. She displayed courage when Pico della Mirandola invaded her territory, and showed personal disregard of the danger of infection when her subjects were oppressed by plague. On her coffin were laid branches of laurel and olive to testify to the goodness of her rule and the fame of her verse.

Gaspara Stampa belonged to a noble Milanese family, and her education appears to have been remarkable. As an orphan, migrating to Venice she dominated a society composed of writers and poets, whilst her verses prove her to have been devoted to another poet, Mirtilla, now believed to be Ippolita Roma of Padua. To Gaspara Stampa we owe the earliest of modern feminine autobiographies, for her life and thought are told in her verse, which reveals the discords that marred her marriage with Collaltino, Count of Collalto:

[1] Translated by Mrs. Jerrold, *vide supra*, p. 83.

Since I am made of fire and you of ice,
You are in liberty and I in chains.

Separation seems to have been followed by other incidents; but really the blade was too bright for the scabbard, and Gaspara wore herself out, dying at the age of thirty-one.

Her best poem is the following madrigal:

My heart with you would be,
My lord, as forth you fare,
Had it remained with me,
Since with your eyes Love made me prisoner.
Therefore with you shall go my sighs
Which only tarry here,
Faithful companions dear,
These and my words and cries;
And should you ever find your escort fled,
Then think that I am dead.[1]

A love very different from that of Michelangelo for Vittoria Colonna was that shown by Raphael for the Fornarina.[2] He was engaged to the niece of Cardinal Divizi, Maria Bibbiena, who appears to have died of mortification at seeing her marriage indefinitely postponed for the sake of a baker's daughter. This latter seems to have been christened Margarita. It matters not. She has been immortalized by his brush, but there is no harm in once more reiterating that her alleged portrait in the Uffizi at Florence is by Sebastiano del Piombo, for which probably Beatrice da Ferrara was model. For nine years the Fornarina followed Raphael, yet he allowed her to be driven from his death-bed so that the Pope's message might be received, and it was left to the executors, instead of the artist, to acknowledge her as his affianced wife. Her subsequent career was unknown until ten years

[1] Mrs. Jerrold, *vide supra*, p. 196.
[2] *Il Raffaelo*, by Elpidio Righi, Urbino, 1879.

Brogi

PROBABLE PORTRAIT OF LUCREZIA BORGIA IN ST. CATHERINE AND THE ELDERS

BY PINTORRICCHIO

ago, when it was discovered that she took the veil in the strict order of Sant' Apollonia,[1] and from the entry in the books it appears that her name was Margarita Luzzi. It was Raphael's passion for her that evoked his masterpieces. What matter if the rest be silence?

Historians have tried to whitewash criminals—for example, John and Richard III[2] in English history. Another sometimes absolved at the tribunal of posterity is Lucrezia Borgia, at one time regarded as the most notorious of her infamous family—a family which dealt as calmly in poison as we with wine among guests. As a matter of fact, research proves that not one deed of hers has been retained by history.[3] She remains a beautiful figure into which romance has breathed an individuality unrecognizable as truth. Her letters are correct and dull. She was nothing more than the passive tool of her father and brother. It was terrible inertia that led her to slide into the abysm of incest. Her true portrait, that of the medal designed by Filippino Lippi, shows a childish face, with a somewhat strange expression, and a pretty profile devoid of all trace of classical features. At Rome she exercised political sway owing to the influence she exerted over her father, Pope Alexander VI. That she cared for her husbands there is no reason to suppose. On the authority of the Venetian ambassador, she seems to have blandly left her chamber when her brother Caesar entered it to slay her spouse Alphonso of Aragon. Later, at Ferrara she was friendly with

[1] *Chi era la Fornarina*, by Antonio Valeri, in *Vita Italiana*, 1897, xvii.

[2] The most recent example is *Richard III: His Life and Character Reviewed in the Light of Recent Research*, by Sir Clements Markham, London, 1907.

[3] *Dames de la Renaissance*, by H. Blaze de Bury, Paris, 1886, p. 96.

Bembo, Giraldi, Hercules Strozzi, and notably with Ariosto, who called her *pulcherrima virgo*, though ecclesiastical benediction had already been pronounced upon her third marriage. United to the house of d'Este, she allowed herself to grow old in congenial society, more *bourgeoise* and less criminal than fiction cares to believe.

Few names of the Renaissance enjoy such enviable distinction as that of Isabella and Beatrice d'Este, but even the most painstaking of biographers[1] fails to portray marked individuality in these healthy, happy, honest sisters. Isabella, the elder, represents the supreme height of feminine Renaissance culture, and her value to ourselves is as a patron of art. Beatrice is typical of the new-found joy in life which was the happiest characteristic of the best period of the Renaissance. Yet her birth was anything but welcome, as the old chronicle naïvely relates:

> "To Duke Ercole was born this day a daughter and received the name of Beatrice, being the child of Madonna Leonora his wife. And there were no rejoicings because every one wished for a boy."[2]

For eight years the child was left at the Court of her grandfather, King Ferrante of Naples, and subsequently at Ferrara she seems to have been eclipsed by her more assertive sister. There were many delays and many fears as to her marriage with Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, but when it was solemnized her importance became unquestioned. She evinced great force of character in her struggle with the Countess Bergannini, so long attached to her husband,

[1] Julia Cartwright (Mrs. Ady), *Beatrice d'Este*, London, 1899; and *Isabella d'Este*, two vols., London, 1903.

[2] *Italicarum Rerum Scriptores*, L. A. Muratori, vol. xxiv.

Lacy

BEATRICE D'ESTE

BUST IN THE LOUVRE

and her happy success was achieved by a compromise eminently characteristic of the epoch. Afterwards came plenty of happiness and unbounded high spirits, as the following letter from Lodovico to his sister-in-law Isabella narrates:

> "I could not tell you one-thousandth part of the tricks in which the Duchess and my wife indulge. In the country they spent their time in riding races and galloping up behind their ladies at full speed so as to make them fall off their horses. And now we are back here in Milan they are always inventing some new form of amusement. They started yesterday in the rain, on foot, with five or six of their ladies, wearing cloths or towels over their heads, and walked through the streets of the city to buy provisions. But since it is not the custom for women to wear cloths on their heads here, some of the women in the street began to laugh at them and make rude remarks, upon which my wife fired up and replied in the same manner, so much so that they almost came to blows. In the end they came home all muddy and bedraggled, and were a fine sight. I believe when your Highness is here, they will go out with all the more courage, since they will have in you so bold and spirited a comrade, and if any one dare to be rude to you they will get back as good as they give."

In proof of this letter may be cited the fact that Isabella and Beatrice were wont to have wrestling matches. A letter from the Ferrarese ambassador on 28 April, 1490, has this passage: "the two duchesses have been having a sparring match, and the Duke of Bari's wife has knocked down her of Milan."

Lodovico also writes of "my wife sewing with as much vigour and energy as any old woman."

There are delightful touches in the motherly pride of Beatrice over her little son. To Isabella she writes:

> "I cannot tell you how well Ercole is looking and how big and plump he has grown lately. Each time I see him after a few days' absence I am amazed and delighted to see how much he has grown and improved, and I often wish that you could be here to see him, as I am quite sure you would never be able to stop petting and kissing him."

While to her mother, "with my own hand," she writes:

> "Your Highness must forgive my delay in writing to you. The reason was that every day I had been hoping the painter would bring me the portrait of Ercole. And I can assure you he is much bigger than this picture makes him appear, for it is already more than a week since it was painted. But I do not send the measure of his height, because people here tell me if I measure him he will never grow."[1]

Verily through the ages we rejoice in the pride of this young mother. Trials came and she met them bravely. Only once was her husband's nerve shaken. In this critical moment Beatrice showed courage and presence of mind, sending for the chief noblemen, addressing brave words to them and taking prompt measures to defend the city. Her last months were embittered by an attachment Lodovico formed for

[1] All these letters are from Mrs. Ady's admirable translation.

Lucrezia Crivelli, one of her own ladies in waiting. That Christmas — she was then twenty-two — her strange and mournful forebodings were noted. Early in the new year she gave birth to a stillborn child and died at midnight.

> "The sky above the Castello of Milan was all ablaze with fiery flames, and the walls of the duchess's own garden fell with a sudden crash to the ground, although there was neither wind nor earthquakes."[1]

Isabella—*la prima donna del mondo* (Niccolo da Correggio)—survived her forty-two years. According to Mario Equicola, her eyes were black and sparkling, her hair yellow, and her complexion one of dazzling brilliancy. Trissino describes the rippling golden hair that flowed in a thick mane over her shoulders, and adds that though of only middle height she was remarkable for the dignity of her carriage and stately grace of her head and neck. The Mantuan envoy said her gifts of mind were more striking than those of her person. Nothing about this Duchess of Mantua is more remarkable then her enormous correspondence and her insatiable interest in everything, especially art. As a patroness she could state her pleasure. For instance, to Luigi Liombeni:

> "Since we have learnt by experience that you are as slow in finishing your work as you are in everything else, we send this to remind you that you must change your nature, and if our *studiolo* is not finished on our return, we intend to put you into the dungeon of the Castello. And this we assure you is no jest on our part."[2]

[1] A contemporary chronicle quoted by Mrs. Ady, p. 306.
[2] *Isabella d'Este*, by Mrs. Ady, vol. i., p. 88.

And again:

"You can paint whatever you like inside the cupboards, as long as it is not anything ugly, because if it is, you will have to paint it all over again at your own expense and be sent to spend the winter in the dungeon, where you can, if you like, spend a night for your pleasure now, to see if the accommodation there is to your taste."[1]

In early days no cloud dimmed her radiance; later sorrow neither crushed her nor abated her tremendous interest. Among the incidents of her varied career it may be mentioned that she presided at one of the weddings of Lucrezia Borgia, and also that in 1514 she had a magnificent welcome both in Rome and Naples. It must be emphasized that she had no sympathy with the Reformation movement so prevalent in Italy, in which Renée de Ferrara was the chief feminine agent. Never, however, is Isabella finer than when retorting to her husband's complaint of her long absence;

"I am sorry but hardly surprised to hear that you were not satisfied with my explanations, and I should be more so if I felt this to be my fault as it certainly is my misfortune. And I certainly do not believe that I have done anything for which I deserve to become 'the common talk of the town.' I know that I have acquired many new friends on your behalf, and that I have behaved as I ought to do and as I am always accustomed to behave; for thanks to the grace of my God and myself, I never needed either to be controlled by others or to be reminded how to govern my actions. Your Excellency owes me as much gratitude as ever any husband owed his wife, and even if you loved and honoured me

[1] *Isabella d'Este*, by Mrs. Ady, vol. i., p. 89.

as much as possible, you could never repay my faithfulness. But even if you should always treat me badly, I would never cease to do what is right, and the less love you show me the more I shall always love you, because in truth this love is part of myself, and I became your wife so young that I can never remember having been without it. Do not be angry with me and say that you do not believe I wish to see you; for if my desire in this respect were satisfied you would let me see you much more often than I do in Mantua."[1]

Here is shown that characteristic of simplicity which makes Isabella d'Este seem to belong to an earlier age. In the words of Mrs. Ady, she saw life steadily, and saw it whole. She was great-souled. Like all the good women of her time, she tolerated vice, and her methods of attaining her ambitious ends were dubious. But this is only to say that she was affected by her environment. Her radiant vitality and her worship of beauty make her worthy of her repute.

Even the briefest review cannot omit reference to some of the ladies of the house of Gonzaga. Eleonora Hippolyta was famed for her virtue and chastity, and not only was her palace open only to ladies of untarnished reputation, but ladies of high birth guilty of impure conduct were actually turned out by her servants with physical force. Julia Gonzaga, who was married to Vespasian Colonna, incurred the admiration of Soliman II, who charged Barbarossa to abduct her. He seized the town she was in, but she escaped, only to fall into the hands of *condottieri*. As to all of which Brantome has much to tell in engrossing fashion. Elizabeth Gonzaga, although her husband,

[1] *Isabella d'Este*, by Mrs. Ady, vol. i.

the Duke of Urbino, lost the use of his limbs, resisted all efforts to have their marriage annulled, and at his death was deeply afflicted. Bembo has recorded that she wrote and spoke with rare perfection. Lucrezia Gonzaga, after being brilliantly educated, was married very young to Paul Manfroni, general in the Venetian service. When he was condemned to death, by strenuous efforts she saved his life and, until his demise eight years later, lived with him in his prison.

This heroism recalls that of Catherine Sforza, who was married to the Prince of Forli. Imprisoned by rebels, she professed herself willing personally to convey the order to surrender to the fortress of Rimini, which was loyally holding out. Once inside its walls, she changed her tone and imperiously bade the astonished rebels lay down their arms. On being reminded that her children left as hostages might be murdered, "Even so, I am able to bear more." The famous Madonna of Forli was never easy to deal with, and the quietest thing in her stormy career was its peaceful end at Florence.

We have already drawn attention to the fact that women were of comparatively little importance in the Italian Renaissance; and even in France—that seat of feminine influence *par excellence*—the position of the sex was of no great account, although there were some notable figures. In the *Histoire Generale*,[1] there is only one sub-section devoted to a woman—to Queen Margaret—in the huge volume dealing with the epoch. In the *Cambridge Modern History*[2] there is a little more; women are incidental. All the same,

[1] *Histoire Generale*, Lavine and Rembaud, vol. iv., *Renaissance*, 980 pages, Paris, 1894.

[2] *Cambridge Modern History*, *Renaissance*, Cambridge, 1902, in which the author had the pleasure of writing on his own country, Hungary, for English readers.

the historian notices a difference. Woman has descended from the pedestal she occupied in the Middle Ages, and so ceases to obtain that half-respectful, half-affected attention with which chivalry exalted but set her apart. In the Renaissance she is jostling in the crowd, and familiar homage is more grateful to her nostrils than the incense of her former worship. The net result, of course, was to humanize men, and the audacity with which these women discussed the most delicate subjects shows that some bloom must have been removed from their ideality, whilst the experiments in Platonic love at least gave thrills of excitement even if the cynic foresaw the inevitable end.

It must be borne in mind that in the social transition the feudal nobility had been transformed into the Court nobility. In fact, the King's circle formed the only society. Francis I appreciated the value of pretty and amusing women, so he formed the famous *Petite Bande* into which he enrolled his daughter-in-law, Catherine of Medici, who was neither pretty nor amusing, but almost diabolically clever. This *coterie* was fed and dressed at his expense; within doors their costumes had to match the hangings of his apartments; out of doors their habits were to match the constantly changing uniform of his troops. They were a volatile, Amazonian squadron, whose mission was to amuse their King.

It may be of interest to mention that everybody rose at five in the morning, dining between ten and eleven, with supper about five in the afternoon and a collation before retiring to bed, which was never at a late hour. At meals both sexes ate off one plate, and every young man had a Platonic mistress chosen for him by his parents, who afforded him an excellent social

education.[1] Some women were even more practically employed, for Dunois, when opposing Emperor Maximilian in Guienne, paid three hundred and fifty girls half the price of male labour to build fortifications. Ladies were captains and generals, but they played their part and never allowed soldiering to degenerate into a ballet.[2] In this respect, the career of Madame de Reitz may be cited. She had ten children, and educated them herself; she was a great scholar, acquainted with the arts, had many lovers though she was not beautiful; her jests were the delight of the Court; she led her troops on behalf of the King against her son, who took up arms for the League, and defeated him.[3] Surely this surpasses even the rush of modern social life.

More gentle is the curious group of poetesses at Lyons. Of these, Pernette de Guillet and Louise Labe were the most notable.[4] Owing to her intense feeling the latter has been called the George Sand of the Renaissance. Blessed with "an angelic countenance," one day she rode off in full armour with the French troops, who nicknamed her Capitaine Loyse. She eventually returned to marry a ropemaker, but she used to discuss music and books with her intellectual friends whilst he toiled. Later she and Olivier de Magny fell "instinctively" in love with one another. For a while they were separated, and on their reunion he wrote a sonnet reproaching her with infidelity during his absence, which aroused so much attention that she left her native town. Almost immediately she died, and then Lyons, by a great funeral, testified admiration for its accomplished daughter.

[1] *Women and Men of the French Renaissance*, Edith Sichel, London, 1902, p. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 22. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 283.

It was among the women connected with the reigning family that the French Renaissance received its feminine exposition. Anne of Beaujeu, daughter of Louis XI, speedily asserted her influence over her weak brother Charles VIII, who was deformed in person and lamentably ignorant. So entirely did she dominate him that he acted only by her dictation. It was her cleverness that suggested that the King should act as guardian to Anne of Brittany, a provincial *bourgeoise* by disposition, an august heiress by birth. Eventually Anne was married to Charles, it being part of the contract that she should marry his successor if he died without issue. This happened, but Louis XII was already married to a childless wife. That marriage was, however, dissolved after a scandalous papal commission, and when the Duchess of Brittany came a second time to be Queen of France within three weeks of the publication of the dissolution, she effectively preserved the fidelity of her husband though she was both plain and fussy. Her mania was for marriages, and the Pope gave her the right of solemnizing them at a portable altar wherever she went.[1] Only once did she and her second husband see differently. This was about the marriage of their daughter Claude. She would rather the girl married Charles V, nay, any prince except the heir apparent Francis, just because she detested his mother Louise of Savoy.

This restless, untiring, scheming woman had been brought up by Anne of Beaujeu and affianced to the Count of Angoulême at the early age of two. When the time came the count agreed to solemnize the marriage in due course if his mistress was recognized and remained with him. This did not augur well,

[1] *Women and Men of the French Renaissance, supra*, p. 30.

but Louise was never sensitive; for instance, she loathed a corpse, yet she held the hand of a deceased holy man of Tours throughout the service of canonization. This man had been the brother of her valet John, and the pair for a while swayed her ambition and pandered to her love of pleasure.

But her son Francis became the passion of her life just as he was that of his sister Margaret—"the Marguerite of all the Marguerites," he called her—and the three formed "Our Trinity," as she expressed it. Francis was unworthy of the adoration he inspired, for he was a sensual profligate who loved every woman he met, except his own wife Claude, daughter of Anne of Brittany and Louis XII. All he gave her as a wedding present was a four-post bed and a counterpane—those trifles and many a heartache. But little cared his mother so long as he was happy. She deliberately chose one mistress, d'Heilly de Pisselen, for him, and as deliberately sent her daughter Margaret to one lover, Bonnivet. As regent she displayed administrative powers of the highest order. At eighteen she had become a widow; henceforth she revelled in maternity, and statecraft was studied on behalf of her children even whilst she herself diligently superintended their education.[1] In the hour of need of her son, she coolly directed the national policy while Francis languished in a Spanish prison. To her, persecution was an incident, diplomacy an accessory, everything unimportant except her children. To foresee what future lay ahead for them she studied astrology, and to that ultimately fell a victim, because she died (in 1532) from the effects of a chill caught whilst studying the course of a meteor.

[1] *Marguerite d'Angoulême*, Martha W. Freer, London, 1854, vol. i., p. 19.

Giraudon

MARGARET D'ANGOULÊME

ABOUT 1548 (AFTER CORNEILLE DE LYON)

Her daughter Margaret is to the French Renaissance what Vittoria Colonna is to the Italian—the foremost feminine figure. It was a poetic legend that she was born of a pearl swallowed by her mother.[1] Though twice married she found happiness in neither union. Her first husband was the Duke of Alençon, the second Henry d'Albret, King of Navarre. This latter she liked, but he was rude to her; for instance, once he said, "You want to know too many things, Margaret," and soundly boxed her ears; also he was unfaithful. Her own feelings as a wife she has recorded in her play *Mal-Mariée.*

There can be no doubt that in life she was not successful, and Miss Sichel thoughtfully ascribes this to the fact that her purposes were always bound up with those of other people, whilst a French critic has observed that she was less remarkable in her actions than in her intentions.[2] Her countenance seems to reveal these tendencies, judging from the description of her, when she was forty, by a contemporary.[3] Her nose was long and her eyes small, with heavy half-shut lids that wore a mysterious look. Her brow was straight and wide, the jaw square and strong, the firm calm mouth betraying sensitiveness in the full lower lip. Her hair was of lightish brown and her neck was long. This is the embodiment of a woman who must have charmed by her intense interest in life.

She found diversion from the greyness of her own affairs in literature and in clever society. To us it may seem strange that the same woman could be

[1] *Histoire de France: La Renaissance*, Michelet, Paris, 1859, p. 267.
[2] *Femmes des Valois*, St. Amand, Paris.
[3] Corneille de Lyon.

simultaneously the friend of Calvin, engrossed in his austere divinity, and of Rabelais, full of the naturalistic brilliancy which has immortalized his name. But Margaret was essentially of her time, an epoch when everything was discussed, even the disease that was ravaging Europe, and she saw no inconsistency in putting down the poems of Clement Marot to discuss reformation tendencies. All her life she was in search of ideas; anybody with one found a ready passport to her sympathy.

In literature her *Heptameron* preserves a permanent place, and it has the peculiarity that it is the most ancient book that any one ignorant of old French can read fluently in the French tongue. Avowedly an imitation of Boccaccio, it provides an almost Pepysian revelation of the Court, and the tales themselves are told with great spirit. She also wrote almost as many poems as were written about her, and some of her sad little religious hymns and meditations possess high merit. She was happiest dictating as she plied her needle, or else mixing with not only the most intellectual people, but also with the peasantry of her domains.

Two passions ruled her life. For the greater part of it she idealized her unprincipled brother Francis, and during the rest she lavished love on her daughter, Jeanne d'Albret, who certainly did not return it. To Francis, Margaret would have sacrificed everything. Her marriage was for his convenience. She went to Madrid during his Spanish captivity to intrigue for his release, and of her the Emperor Charles observed, "She is more of a prodigy than a woman." Every one that Francis loved, she loved; his mistresses, his horses, his courtiers, all that gave him pleasure she thought perfect.

"I was yours before you were born, you are more to me than father, mother, and husband. Compared to you, husband and children count for nothing."

So she cried to him and proved her words, for after her husband had failed ignominiously at the battle of Pavia, he crept home to die amid her indifference. As for her daughter, when Francis wanted her to be married against her will to the Duke of Cleves, Margaret in her servile love thrashed the girl daily until Jeanne managed to elude her and read a protest against her marriage to an astonished group of the lights of the realm. A little later, when the political kaleidoscope made this marriage seem undesirable, Jeanne read another even more forcible protest against not being permitted to marry this very man. Feminine variability has been a feature in every century.

How far Margaret could go in love for Francis may be gathered from her acknowledgment of his gift to her of a crucifix:

"I can do nothing but embrace the finely-carved figure for the honour and reverence I bear my two Christs."

Lest any one should think her irreverent, let us quote what happened on the death, at the age of a few months, of her only son:

"She went into her room and, without the aid of any womanish action, she kneeled down and very humbly thanked the Lord for all the good it had pleased Him to do her."

Then she caused a *Te Deum* to be sung; but ever after that she wore black.

Her later life was embittered by the reckless extravagance of her daughter. As to this, her nephew, Henry II, wrote:

> "The Queen of Navarre is on the worst terms possible with her husband, and all because of her love for her daughter, who takes no notice of her mother. You never saw such tears as my aunt shed when they parted."

Poor Margaret always suffered from excess of feeling, and in later years trials bore heavily on her. Of her beloved brother's death she dreamt, at the very time, that he appeared to her with a countenance of ashen hue, and imploringly cried to her "My sister." In the same way she foretold her own demise after dreaming that a white-robed figure stood at her bedside, murmuring, "Soon, soon." Her end occurred under exactly the same circumstance as that of her mother, namely, from a chill caused by lingering too long to watch a comet, in 1549.

It is notable that as age advanced Margaret became completely reunited to the Roman Catholic Church, losing all connection with the Reformers, who, however, had grown so strong that the Sorbonne dared to summon her—the sister of their King—to be interrogated, a summons she contemptuously neglected. Although she had called death "the true sleep, the very gentle slumber," yet she showed a strong aversion when her hour was at hand. For forty days at one time of mourning she had acted as abbess at Tusson, but to part from existence and from her beloved daughter was a sore trial. The epitaph of this storm-tossed lady recites that she was:

> "Sister and wife of Kings; the Queen of the Muses; the tenth of their band and their dearest

care; the fourth Charity; the Queen of Knowledge."

She left one pale echo in her devoted niece Margaret of Berry, Duchess of Savoy, who modelled herself on her, and after a love-match wrote poems which were as good in purpose as they were poor in purport.

Reference has already been made to Henry II, and a cursory mention must not be omitted of the curious attraction which Diana of Poitiers exercised for him. She first met him when she was thirty-seven and he an awkward boy. Any one who has human sympathies can understand the love of a man and a maid; but this sexual affection for a being old enough to be the King's mother removes all romance from the relationship. She was a plain but intelligent woman, shrewd and practical in character, who aged prematurely, despite the ice-cold bath on the efficacy of which she laid such stress. Being a widow she always wore black, and out of compliment to her so did the sordid Court of her lover, then the Dauphin, whom she unobtrusively controlled. The fiction that she had illicit relations with his father has been finally buried.[1] Catherine of Medici, who married the contemptible devotee of this unattractive widow, introduced the Italian statecraft of Machiavellism, and also the Italian skill in poison. Indeed, it was currently asserted that Jeanne d'Albret was poisoned by a pair of gloves she sent her.

Jeanne had married Antony of Bourbon, and had given birth to a child who has lived in romance as Henry IV, a chivalresque figure as different from the real man as England's Henry V of tradition was from the true Prince Hal. Jeanne was the real ruler of

[1] *Lettres de Diane de Poitiers*, ed. by Guiffry, Paris.

Navarre, for her husband was her tool, and between France and Spain the little kingdom stood in frequent peril. But there was nothing timorous about Margaret's daughter. "Only of woman had she the sex: her soul was in virile things, her powerful mind was for great affairs, her heart was invincible to adversity."[1] Political matters engrossed her, and she threw in her lot with the Reformation, refusing to allow the Inquisition into the kingdom. So her Court became the shelter of all those who had reformed views, and in Navarre the churches were used for both Protestant and Catholic rites. Under Jeanne we see all the brightness of the Renaissance lost in the sombreness of the Reformation. She underwent many trials, evinced great personal courage, but she was a chill, unlovable woman, and her early extravagance was the chief trait which united her with the preceding epoch. Her death took place a month before her son married his cousin Margaret, sister of Charles IX.

She left the field entirely free to Catherine de Medici, Henry II's widow, and Charles IX's mother. A woman capable of complete dissimulation, she had inherited maladies which may have given her mind a sinister bent. As a girl she is described as a "small-formed, lathy, large-eyed Italian, with dark hair and a yellow-white complexion."[2] She came to the French Court to be married to the contemptible Dauphin, engrossed in his infatuation for Diana—an infatuation all the greater because it had several temporary digressions.[3] It was Catherine's cue to be unobtrusive. She had the skill to become the friend of her husband's mistress, and could talk horses and war to her

[1] D'Aubigny.

[2] *Girlhood of Catherine de Medici*, T. A Trollope, London, 1856, p. 246.

[3] e.g. the English girl Haming and others.

CATHERINE DE MEDICI
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father-in-law Francis better than any one else. Her submissiveness to Diana was the velvet glove in which she concealed her poisoning hand. Only when she was forty-three could she really assert herself. Then :

> "She was vigorous, a great eater, her obesity already suggesting itself, passionately fond of bodily exercises, never still, a great walker, an untiring rider; inciting her sons to the chase, her favourite pastime, she would lead them through the stiffest country; in her could be felt that need for action which, for lack of better occasion, expended itself out of doors, and which, at the first opportunity, would be devoted to affairs of State. With all this she was easy of access, amiable and gracious in manner, smiling ever under the '*soyes lugubres*' which she never quitted after the death of her unfaithful husband, quick and supple of intellect, capable of every craft, but very firm in the plans she had decided upon; full of confidence in herself and greedy for power, she not only appeared as 'queen above all the princesses of her Court,[1] she also meant to be such.'"[2]

For years she was involved in the strife of parties, and never did she scruple to use whatever lay to her hand, however base. It is noteworthy, in times when feuds are based on religion, that she was no bigot, and was probably perplexed that Paris should be so stirred by doctrinal matters.[3] Directly she came in collision with Admiral Coligny she planned his death. This was to her the most natural action. The massacre of

[1] *Œuvres Completes*, Brantome, Paris, 1875, vol. vii., p. 388.
[2] *Catherine de Medici entre Guise et Condé*, B. de Lacombe, Paris, 1899, p. 92.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 276.

St Bartholomew[1] can only be regarded as the outcome of her personal design. Against the subsequent coalition antagonistic to her, she acted with presence of mind and cool courage; but directly she was invested with the Regency she was forced to humiliating concessions, and after a period of thirty years, during which she had guided the policy of France, her death occurred almost unnoticed amid the consternation excited by the murder of the Guises.

She may be regarded as the soul of the peace party, and if in the Civil War she saw her descendants engaged in exterminating one another, she appears to have exhibited little emotion; for example, she was absolutely impassive at the death of her son, Francis II. There was a dry directness about her; to those besieged in Orleans she wrote: "No one wishes them harm, but let them obey and disarm."[2] There was also some humour, for when the King of Navarre wanted to hang some passers-by because they were singing songs insulting to her, she only answered, "No, no, my cousin; those are not our game." When dying she was told of the assassination of the Duke de Guise, and observed, "That is well cut out; now sew the pieces together." To her Paris owed the great palace of the Tuileries, and her hundred and fifty maids of honour formed a flying squadron of immense diplomatic value in her cautious generalship.

It is impossible to quit this epoch without some allusion to sorcery. Demoniacal possession, belief in the supernatural, gross superstition, credulity about astrology and alchemy, all formed part of mediæval life, and sent countless victims to the stake which was

[1] Estimated by de Thou to amount to thirty thousand victims, while Davila believed ten thousand were slain in Paris alone.

[2] *Lettres de Catherine de Medici*, vol. i., p. 290.

set alight by the Inquisition. One German monk has asked why there were so few sorcerers and so many witches, adding, "Why was the Devil better able to get on good terms with women than men?"[1] (The episodic and blasphemous Satan-worship occasionally heard of in modern times seems to be a silly survival.[2]) The answer is to be found in the fact that unless a woman was a remarkable exception to the average, she was only in the way after she passed forty. To obtain notice, to be of importance, and to get money, were the motives of the witchcraft of the Renaissance. It has been asserted that the Rosary was invented so that the intercession to the Virgin mechanically made might keep off the influence of the Evil One.[3] Superstition will never die. The crystal-gazers in Chicago to-day, amid the much-vaunted American culture, are no more anachronisms than the astrologers and witches who conferred with the greatest lights of the Renaissance.

One other woman remains to be mentioned: that Spanish sovereign who was the fanatical agent of priest and monk. In no country have women lent less assistance to national progress or to the development of character than in Spain. Oriental traditions and the exaggeration of chivalry alike set the sex aside, so that the historical importance of the women of Hispanola need not occupy us here. Isabella simply exercised the most retrograde influence. It is true that in her vigorous career she waged a crusade against the Moors, and so tried to get Spain for the Spanish. The reason of this was not patriotism, but

[1] *Marteau des Sorcieres*, Sprenger, quoted by Michelet, *vide supra*, p. 106.

[2] M. Huysmann has compiled a work on the subject, and there are others.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

in order to hand over the whole kingdom to the tyrannical vagaries of the Inquisition. Isabella's bigotry undoubtedly has in every generation appealed to her nation. Her despotism was to the glory of the Church, and that glory she furthered by mystic views on religion, which merely made her the tool of one confessor after another.

Inconsistencies were to be noted even in her vigorous character. Her prudery was so great that she refused to allow her foot to be uncovered to receive extreme unction, which was applied to her stocking, yet her caustic wit was expressed in the coarsest terms. She refused ever to see a bull-fight after attending one at which two men were killed ; yet she consigned thousands of persons to the flames on doctrinal grounds, and allowed a madman, who had attempted her husband's life, to be torn in pieces with red-hot pincers.[1] When the women of Seville crowded to her to beg pardon for the insurrection in Andalucia, she graciously stayed her hand ; but, having granted an amnesty, she instituted an active and corrupt police tribunal. There is not a shadow of proof, despite frequent assertions, that she ever interceded for the Castilians with Torquemada, the Inquisitor-General. To her and to him one national historian[2] has ascribed the appalling honour of establishing this terrible Inquisition. In early life she had a desperate struggle to get power ; once she had it, she used it grimly for the souls of heretics to the utter disregard of their bodies.

How much she was ruled by priests may be shown from the incident that when Talavera became her confessor he bade her kneel at his feet. When she replied that monarchs sat beside their confessor, he retorted

[1] *Queens of Old Spain*, Martin Hume, London, 1906, p. 31.
[2] *Reinas Catholicas*, H. Flores, Madrid, 1770, two vols.

that his seat was the seat of God, before which all knelt without distinction, and thereafter she knelt and honoured him for compelling her to do so. Her domesticity was so great that her husband never wore a shirt except those she made for him,[1] but her personality overshadowed his. The conquest of Granada irradiated Christendom, and it was one of the dramatic moments of the world's history when she dismounted to kneel to offer her thanks for the victory in the presence of the victorious and the vanquished armies. "Weep," cried the mother of Boabdil after he lost the Alhambra, "weep like a woman for the city you knew not how to defend like a man."

The pretty legend that Isabella pledged her jewels to assist in dispatching Columbus on his voyage is a myth.[2] What, alas! is not fiction is her terrible persecution of the Jews, while in 1503 not a single professed Moslem remained in Spain, thanks to her brutal methods. Yet she could be playful in her own circle, and was on the happiest terms with her children, always calling her eldest daughter, the Queen of Portugal, by the nickname of "mother." It must indeed have been gall to her when her younger daughter Joan—"more handsome and buxom than ever," as Friar Matienzo reported—openly dispensed in Flanders with the rigid narrowness of Spanish religious observance, and when after a diplomatic reconciliation there occurred the flight from Castille of Joan's husband, Phillip of Burgundy, which was the greatest slight ever put on Ferdinand and Isabella.

There can be no doubt that the arduous life Isabella had led, especially her restless riding from place to

[1] *El Cardinal Cisneros*, by Navarro Rodrigo.

[2] *Las Joyas de la Reina Isabel*, Don Duro in *Revista Contemporanea*, vol. xxxviii.

place, weakened her constitution. Her final illness was rendered miserable by anxiety for her beloved husband, sick elsewhere. "Do not weep for the loss of my body, rather pray for the gain of my soul," she said to her weeping attendants at the end.

In her expired one of the figures of absolute power, a sovereign whose personal virtue is untarnished, but who inflicted more suffering than any other woman of modern times. She was the "hark-back" from the Renaissance, and to this day Spain has not awakened from the slumber into which Isabella forced that land at the instigations of the clergy at her elbow.

END OF VOL. I

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